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# messing about in **BOATS**

Volume 11 - Number 3

June 15, 1993





# COMMENTARY



messing  
about in

## BOATS

Volume 11 - Number 3  
June 15, 1993

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## Our Next Issue

Will bring the return of reports of on-the-water events of interest after a long winter of not much happening on the water. Ron Kilburn brings us a photo report on the North Carolina Wooden Boat Show, Don Betts reports on Brooklyn's "Cool Boats for the Urban Environment, and I report on the special Mystic Seaport Traditional Small Craft Meet remembering Pete Culler and his designs. Adventure tales will include Jim Lacey's "Sanibel Revisited" dropped from this issue and Seth Taylor's reminiscing on growing up in small boats in "That Was the River". We'll look over Bill Clements' lovely little 13' canoe yawl "Nord Vinden" and read about Jim Michalak's evolution of his "Toto" and "Roar II" designs. A new lot of Bolger designs will begin, but I haven't seen them at this writing. For projects, Roger James reports on repairing a Penguin and Dave Carnell describes his "Yankee Rolling Rig" sliding seat design. And with summer on the water at hand, Malcolm Forbes presents his clever inexpensive "Magnetic Bearing Plotter" for small boat use.

## On the Cover

Mindy Bolduc enjoys the Bahama sunshine on the foredeck of "Little Cruiser" after sailing the diminutive 15' sailboat across from Florida last winter with her husband David. They tell their tale in this issue.

In the May 15th issue I turned over this page to Dave Getchell, Sr. for him to tell us about the changes that have taken place in the structure of the Maine Island Trail Association, which he pioneered the formation of several years ago. In essence, MITA is now on its own, no longer affiliated with the Island Institute. As a large (2,000+) association of people interested in preserving and protecting accessible Maine coast islands for recreational use, it shared some common interests with the Island Institute, an island social, economic and cultural preservationist group mainly supported by island landowners and inhabitants, rather than visiting recreationists.

The volunteer members of MITA who choose to work on the issues of island use, access, wildlife protection, sanitation, etc. have organized into several regional "chapters" each interested in its own portion of the 300+ mile long water trail that runs from Portland to Eastport. But one such group is outside the geographic locale of the Trail, MITA members in southern New England. This group, to which I belong, is trying to determine what it best can do, more than just supporting one another on treks to the Maine coast to enjoy boating on the Trail. Meetings are presently going on to try to develop some useful support for the Trail.

As it happens, the overwhelming preponderance of sea kayakers in the group, which meets in the suburbs of Boston, has tended to obscure the fact that this is not exclusively a "paddling" trail. This group's membership does seem to reflect the makeup of the overall membership to some degree, sea kayakers have seized upon the Trail as an ideal venue for enjoying their sport. It certainly is that, and it is no surprise that the sea kayakers are the most active single interest group of small boaters working to preserve and expand this access. What a deal! Paddling from island to island, camping overnight on islands that quite successfully pass for wilderness experiences.

This has caused pioneer Getchell some distress, for while he holds nothing whatever against the sea kayakers and their support for and use of the Trail, he wants other sorts of small boat folks to enjoy using the Trail. He includes small motorboats, chiefly outboards, of course, which happen to be his personal preference for getting around in on the water. Needless to say, this subject requires the environmentally sensitized kayakers to open their minds enough to accept the intrusion of motorized small craft into their

wilderness experiences. Not an easy thing for some, we have noted. Unhappily, the outboard motorboaters have acquired the same bad press afloat that motorcyclists have suffered for years ashore for the same reason, motorized vehicles provide an irresponsible few the chance to be center stage with their noise and speed.

I found that the sea kayakers with whom I have discussed this topic were completely unaware of their own intrusiveness into the former wilderness experiences of the cruising yachtsmen, who for years (much of this century) have anchored off pristine wild Maine islands and enjoyed the remoteness and absence of the human mob. Now they arrive to find a row of brightly colored popsicles lined up on that golden beach with little mushrooms of brightly colored tents popping up nearby ashore.

Well, everyone who could find pleasure in using the Maine Island Trail, and other similar trails that are now being developed patterned after this one, will have to learn to get along. Dave would like to see the small motorboater and sailor take more advantage of this resource. The impression that this is a paddling trail for kayaks has taken hold, chiefly due to the fact that kayaks are far and away the most numerous users. But, any small sailing or motoring boat that can be beached or anchored off a few yards is suitable for access to the island environments available.

Sailing access is no longer limited to those larger yachts which are floating RV's, now that one can go ashore on so many of the islands and camp overnight with the blessing of the state land managers and private island owners who are making their islands available to MITA membership use. You don't have to overnight aboard your craft anymore, so small boats now provide ideal access. Can't get much smaller than a sea kayak in terms of carrying capacity and overnight capability.

All of this is by way of encouraging those of you who own small trailerable sail or motorboats to join MITA (see their membership ad on page 8 in this issue) and use the 1993 Guidebook available only to members to plan some visits to whichever islands seem most attractive to your abilities and interests. When you meet others out there using different sorts of small boats, but sharing the common desire to overnight in an island setting, you'll get to know one another a bit better, and with this comes better understanding of the rewards of the other ways to play and an acceptance of them.



# Happenings

## MORE ABOUT THIS CALENDAR

As listings increase in number I find myself having to continually adapt to get all useful material into print without overwhelming the available space. This calendar now will become, in the 1st issue of each month, a complete listing of all pertinent events for that month and the succeeding one. In the alternate mid-month issues, such as this one, I will publish only additional listings not in hand in time for the earlier listing. So if you consult this calendar, hang onto the first issue of each month as anything appearing in that one will not be repeated in this one.

## ONGOING EVENTS

### THROUGH THE SUMMER MONTHS:

Community Boating Rowing Program.  
Riverfront Recapture, 1 Hartford Sq., Hartford,  
CT 06106-1984.

## JUNE & JULY EVENTS

### JUNE 19:

Cathlamet Wooden Boat Show. Elchoman  
Marina, Cathlamet, WA, (206) 849-4267.

### JUNE 19-20:

Half Model Class. NC Maritime Museum,  
Beaufort, NC, (919) 728-7317.

### JUNE 26:

Five Boat Launching. Landing School,  
Kennebunkport, ME, (207) 985-7976

### JULY 3:

Classic Yacht Race. Center for Wooden  
Boats, Seattle, WA, (206) 382-2628.

### JULY 3-5:

Lake Union Wooden Boat Festival. Center  
for Wooden Boats, Seattle, WA, (206) 382-  
2628.

## JULY 4:

17th Annual CWB Auction. Center for  
Wooden Boats, Seattle, WA, (206) 382-2628.

## JULY 10-11:

Lofting Class. NC Maritime Museum,  
Beaufort, NC, (919) 728-7317.

Lofting Workshop. Center for Wooden  
Boats, Seattle, WA, (206) 382-2628.

## JULY 17-23:

Adirondack Freestyle Canoeing Sympos-  
ium. Paul Smiths, NY. Tom McKenzie, (608)  
231-2192.

## JULY 17-25:

Lapstrake Workshop. Center for Wooden  
Boats, Seattle, WA, (206) 382-2628.


## JULY 24-25:

Boatbuilding Carpentry Class. NC Mari-  
time Museum, Beaufort, NC, (919) 728-7317.

## JULY 26-29:

Art of Marine Survey. Center for Wooden  
Boats, Seattle, WA, (206) 382-2628.

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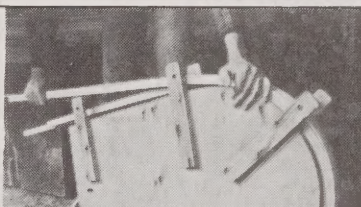
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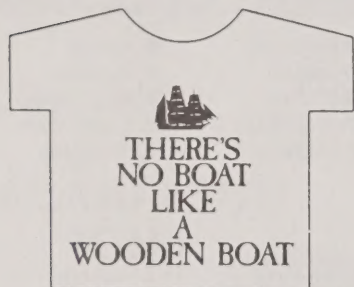


## ANNIVERSARY CONGRATULATIONS

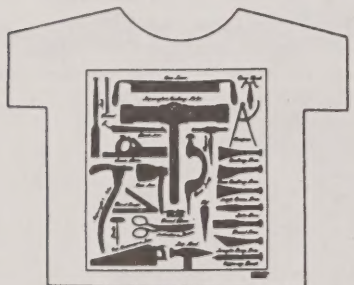
Congratulations from all of us at Wooden Boat School on a decade of wonderful work in putting together "Messing About in Boats". It remains one of our students' most popular magazines to browse through while they're here with us in Brooklin. And thanks for the coverage you have given to our School over the years. We wish you another ten years of success with our enthusiastic support.

Rich Hilsinger, Director, Wooden Boat School, Brooklin, ME.

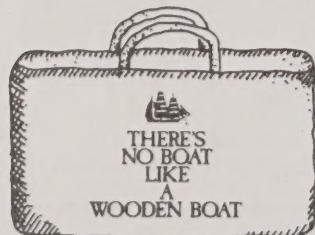
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## Your Commentary

### AUTHOR, AUTHOR!

Who was the author of the article entitled "Leo Telesmanick and the Beetle Cats" in the April 1st issue? It was a wonderful story about a craftsman and a boat in an era we will never see again. I had never, incidentally, known the genesis of the name, "Beetle Cat".

I sailed a Beetle Cat one summer in the late '30's before getting hooked on one-design racing dinghies. Some years later I was given a dilapidated Beetle Cat and had high hopes of restoring her, but, alas, she was too far gone. My children and their friends spent many happy hours during the next two summers "sailing" her in the back yard until she became a hazard to life and limb. She then provided warmth from the fireplace during several winter evenings.

I still have the brass traveller someplace and a pair of bookends made from the oak transom, and memories of a boat that never saw the water again but provided my children with many imaginary adventures. Although I now sail bigger (better?) boats, I will always remember the pure sailing pleasure of that Beetle Cat experienced as a youth. I wish to thank the author for a most informative and interesting tale.

Ralph Eldridge, Middletown, RI.

Editor's Comment: The author is a professional writer, Bob Holtzman, who, when he learned we could not pay him for his work, said to go ahead and publish it anyway for the pleasure of the readers. So we did, and failed to include the credit line through carelessness. Subsequent to its being written and submitted to us, late last year Charlie York returned to take over operation of the Beetle Cat shop, which he had run from October, 1983, to October, 1988, in which five-year period 120 new Beetle Cats were turned out.

### YES, WHAT ABOUT THAT BUFFALO FERRY?

An letter from a reader in a recent issue inquiring into a boat pictured at the St. Michaels meet last fall, the "Buffalo Ferry", prompts me to tell you that Bill Bartoo of the Center for Watercraft Studies at Buffalo State University will have his "Buffalo Ferry" at the Wooden Boat Show, where he will indeed be sculling.

Valerie LaFrance, Wooden Boat Show, Brooklin, ME.

### "A TREASURED GIFT" STRUCK HOME

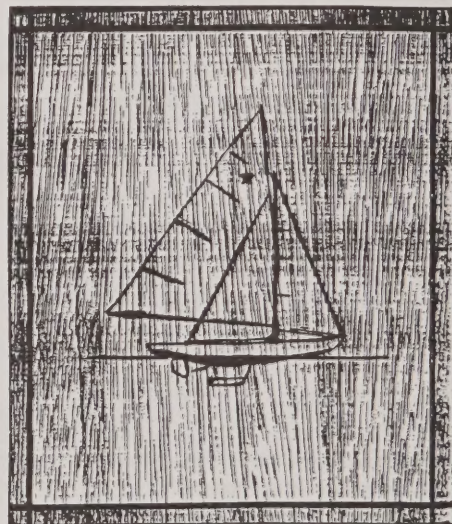
The April 15th article entitled "A Treasured Gift" by Ward Bell really struck home. I too am a Star sailor from the 1950's. Mr. Bell's account of fixing up an old low aspect Star and sailing her is very close to my own experience with a boat my father found on the shores of Greenwood Lake after the war. Good memories of that period persist to this day.

If Mr. Bell would like to see his old #14 sailing among her contemporaries, number patch and all, I urge him to get his hands on a book entitled "The Macmillan Book of Boating" by William N. Wallace, published in 1964 by the Macmillan Co., NY. His local library should be able to locate a copy, it was a popular book in its day. If he opens the book to pages 150-151 he will see "Starward" in action, as well as a photo of George Corry and George Elder in their regatta garb. The photo credit names Morris Rosenfeld & Sons of NY as another possible source if the book cannot be found. (Ed. Note: The Rosenfeld Collection is now at Mystic Sea port).

If Mr. Bell looks further to pages 146-147 he will see my father's Star, circa 1924. "Cetus" was precisely as it is shown right down to the last fitting. We sailed her with this low rig for a number of years and finished last most of the time. Despite this I still loved being amongst the hottest sailors on the lake. "Cetus" sailed with just one finger on each side of the tiller in most lake winds, a testimony to Sweiguth's genius. Later, my father moved up to a newer "tall rig" boat, but I liked old #127 best.

Thanks, Mr. Bell, for bringing a "treasured gift" to all of us old Star sailors who read your article.

John Hoagland, Longmeadow, MA.



### MORE ON THE STAR CLASS

This illustration is from a woodburning plaque I made for a friend who presented me with a 1922 Star Class Log ("A Treasured Gift", April 15th). This shows how close the original gaff rig, with its sliding gunter, was to the marconi rig that was introduced as optional in 1921. By the end of 1922 the new marconi rig proved faster and owners made taller masts and recut the old mains at first. But soon newly cut marconi mains were made especially for the new taller mast.

This was the standard until 1930 when a taller mast and shorter boom paved the way for the modern flexible rig. My old Star #14 had its gaff rig from 1911 until I re-rigged it in 1933.

Ward Bell, Sea Cliff, NY.



### MULTI-OARED ROWING MULTIHULLS

At a recent meeting of the Connecticut River Oar & Paddle Club, Walter Giger of the Amateur Yacht Research Society presented preliminary drawings of catamaran and trimaran fixed seat rowing boats. I am interested to learn if there are any of these currently being raced and if so, what are their designs?

Gail Ferris, 1 Bowhay Hill, Stony Creek, CT 06405.

### HOW ABOUT PEDAL BOATS?

I wish someone would explain to me about pedal boats. Many places we go have lakes and many of these have pedal boats, well, they call them boats. They're okay if you don't mind pedalling like mad, creating lots of splash and going nowhere.

Years ago we had very nice pedal boats, comfortable, with fairly long pontoons, and they moved through the water reasonably well. They were actually fun. Now everyone uses these stupid little square molded plastic boxes. Would it cost any more to mold something that worked better?

J.S. Smith, 194 Greylock Pkwy, Belleville, NJ 07109.

### ABOUT PEOPLE ACTUALLY DOING THINGS

I have come to realize that "Messing About in Boats" is the magazine I enjoy reading the most because it is about people actually doing things rather than about things to buy. Phil Bolger is always interesting even when, as occasionally happens, the actual design is too weird for words. I have a copy of his canoe yawl concept study on the wall of my office just to dream about. Now that I have some experience with lapstrake plywood...

"Toad Hall" is very good as well, it's nice to see so much original thinking. One or two New England rivers would have been quite enough, however.

Keith Wilson, St. Paul, MN.

### EVEN MY WIFE...

Thank you for your good work. Even my wife is getting hooked, especially on the stories contributed by amateur writers.

Karl Kristin, Birmingham, MI.

### PELICANS ARE PROSPERING

Since 1959 when the San Francisco Pelican was designed, the Class has grown into the thousands. Many of the older boats have found new owners who may not know exactly what kind of bird they have in hand. The original registration/sail number might be hard to identify and the boat could need restoration work.

Our 48 page building instruction booklet and drawings show how a restoration should be done, with extra pages on items of hardware to be replaced. The 1993 Revised Racing Specifications & Measurement Rules are included. We encourage new owners of San Francisco Pelicans to keep their construction with the Class Specifications. In addition to preserving the integrity of the design, such Pelicans will find welcome in local fleet events.

At present, the largest organized fleets are in the San Francisco bay area and the Pacific northwest. Both fleets issue newsletters, the "Pelican Post" and the "Pelican Pouch". Individual owners can be members-at-large of the Pelican Racing & Cruising Association.

Muriel Short, Secretary, Pelican Racing & Cruising Association, 203 Hawthorne Ave., Larkspur, CA 94939.

### WOMEN IN ROWING

I would be interested in articles concerning women in rowing, historically and contemporarily.

Marie McCarthy, Cohasset, MA.

### MORE ON ROWING IN NEW YORK HARBOR

Your publishing of portions of my letter about getting recreational rowing going in New York harbor in the April 15th issue resulted in a letter from a second year student at Lance Lee's maritime workshop who is from Queens. He may well join our effort next fall. We'll need others like him to bring the citizens and officials of New York City to recognize the untapped possibilities on our waterways.

Michael Davis, 400 W 43rd St. (32R), New York, NY 10036.




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Beached in the Berry Isles.

## Cruising in "Little Cruiser"

By David & Mindy Bolduc

"Little Cruiser" is our 15' lug rigged sharpie designed and built by our friend, Matt Layden. She is 4-1/2 feet wide and draws 9" with the centerboard up. There is no cockpit as this would take up precious space on such a small boat. Instead, you stay below out of the spray and the wind, steering and handling all the lines from within. She is water ballasted and her tanks can be automatically filled whenever it rains. The toe rails channel water into holes in the deck that lead to the tanks. She has a galley and plenty of stowage under the floor boards. Heavily built of plywood, she can stand up to the rigors of cruising, and has proven to be the perfect boat for us.

In January of 1993 "Little Cruiser" was trailered from our home in North Carolina to Cedar Key, Florida, where we joined up with Matt. Matt had just completed a year-long cruise in his modified Balboa 20 which drew a mere 10 inches. During the next few weeks we cruised the shallow waters of the Florida west coast where no deep draft boats dare go. Daily groundings were a common ritual as much of our sailing was done in only a few feet of water. A simple push was all that was needed to get us moving again.

One of the things that impressed Mindy and I the most about the west coast of Florida was the abundant birdlife. We had to borrow Matt's bird book to keep up with all the new species. The most interesting was the anhinga. A cousin to the commorant, it has a long snake-like neck, and catches fish by spearing them with it's sharp beak. Sometimes we would see one on the riverbank with a fish skewered in its beak.

Our explorations also carried us up rivers. One day we decided to sail 15 miles up the Swanee River to go to Manatee Springs. We had been told that in the winter time the manatees hung out in the warm spring fed pools. We found the manatee pool and swam in it but did not find any manatees so we headed back down river to poke our bows into the skinny shallow backcreeks. After anchoring overnight in one of these creeks, we were startled the next morning by a large alligator who crashed into the water when approached. He had spent the night on a nearby bank.

All too soon it was time to move on so we said goodbye to Matt and trailered "Little Cruiser" to Everglade City to explore the 10,000 Islands National Park. The park, which had just recently been re-opened after Hurricane Andrew's visit, proved to be another ideal

cruising ground for our shallow draft cruiser. We quickly found out that the 10,000 islands really should have been called the 10,000 mangroves. We explored many of the tortuous shallow water passages back into the Everglades, and got lost a few times. It's hard to tell one mangrove from another. It all looks the same unless you're an experienced guide. Even though we did not see any alligators in the park, we did not go swimming, preferring to wait until we got to the Bahamas. Often times, while anchored out in the mangroves, we were left high and dry in the mud when the tide fell. It's amazing to see how many creatures live in that muddy ooze. Though the Everglades were nice, we were anxious to go to the Bahamas by now, but before leaving we went to visit a little boat that Matt had told us was on a dock in Everglade City, Knicknamed the "Bathtub", this 8' sailboat had crossed the Atlantic around 1962. The boat was very small and bare and made "Little Cruiser" look like a luxury yacht. I guess if you're willing to suffer you can cross the ocean in just about anything.

The most challenging part of the trip was across the Gulf Stream. We had read so many stories of big seas and rough weather that we were a bit intimidated considering the size of our



Left: Cruising on the Swanee River. Below: Drying out in the Everglades.







Mini ocean cruisers, the "Bathtub" and "Father's Day" Talk about minimal cruising!

boat. To boost our morale and to kill some time while we were waiting for good weather, we decided to go visit "April Fool", the 6' boat which was sailed across the Atlantic by Hugo Vihlen in 1968. We had heard that it was in a local museum, but found out that the museum had closed. We called Hugo up to ask him where the boat was and he said that it was in his back yard. Being a fellow small boat enthusiast, he invited us over and we got to see not only "April Fool", but his latest creation, "Father's Day", a 5-1/2' transatlantic sailboat. This micro cruiser was very sophisticated in design and reminded us of a space capsule. Onboard was a GPS, a watermaker, an SSB radio, and a VHF. It's amazing how much stuff can fit into such a small space. This summer he said he will try to cross the Atlantic on Father's Day. After telling us about his boats, Hugo encouraged us on with our own adventure and gave us advice on the crossing.

The next day the winds began to drop and we headed for Key Biscayne. We were planning to leave from Cape Florida and we wanted to be in position when the conditions became favorable for a safe crossing. While heading down the intracoastal towards Key Biscayne we were passed by a large catamaran whose skipper hollered in jest, "When you get a real boat, get a cat!" We enjoyed passing him at the first low bridge. We lowered our mast, ducked under the bridge, and waved good bye. No hour-long wait for us!

A day later light winds were predicted, and we left Key Biscayne for our first open water passage. Winds were northeasterly, and it wasn't long before we were met by large Atlantic swells as we approached the course of the Gulf Stream. The strong north wind earlier that week had pushed hard against the Gulf Stream to produce these large walls of water. Though not particularly steep, the waves were mast high, and it was scary as we were swallowed up into the troughs and lost all our wind. We motorsailed for 14 hours and nearly ran out of gas, arriving in Cat Key at night. Six gallons of gas just isn't enough for a 60 mile crossing! There were few lights on Cat Key and no navigational aids as this island was hit and nearly levelled by the full force of Hurricane Andrew; therefore, we anchored near the shore until daylight.

Nothing can prepare one for the Bahamas after the bleakness of any empty ocean. From the dark magenta water of the Gulf Stream, you

are welcomed to paradise by the crystal clear turquoise waters and fine white sandy beaches of the Bahamas. Clearing customs was no problem at all and proved to be a bit comical. The customs man at Cat Key could not believe we had crossed over in such a small boat. We invited him on board but he refused, fearing the little boat might tip over under his weight. He was used to boarding the average 40 footer, not a 15 footer. Once we received our clearance papers we were off to Bimini.

The rest of our trip proved to be one unplanned adventure after the next. We made friends wherever we went. The weather determined our route, and we traveled when the winds were favorable. Docking was sometimes a problem until other cruisers invited us to tie up to their larger boats. We were so small that we had trouble fending off the pilings. The dockside joke was that we were the dingy for whoever's boat we were tied to at the time. At night, as we tried to sleep, strangers would stop to look at "Little Cruiser" and discuss whether she had crossed over on her own. Sometimes we would surprise them by popping our heads out of the hatch and telling them of our adventure.

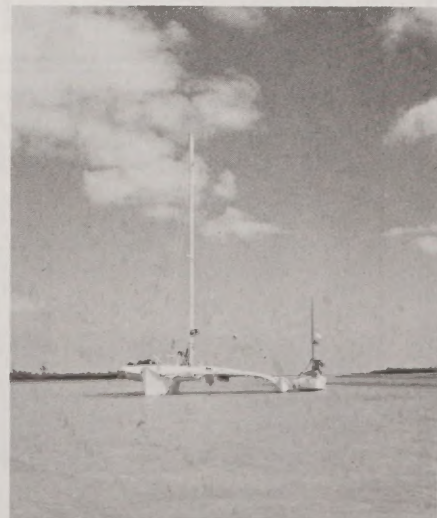
Some of our favorite cruising grounds in the Bahamas were the less traveled areas surrounded by shallow water. We explored the mangrove creeks on the west side of Bimini known as Bonefish Hole where we saw giant manta rays and the occasional shark. Another of our favorite spots was in the Berry Islands where we found the most beautiful deserted beaches to picnic on. Many new friends were made while cruising the Berry Islands, but one of our favorites was the McGregor family. They were traveling on a fantastic 37 foot proa called "Cimba", built by Lew McGregor and Russel Brown. Though spartan in comparison to the typical cruiser, she was extravagant next to "Little Cruiser". We had lots of fun together swimming, fishing and eating. Combining our food made for more variety and new recipes. We discovered we had much in common with most of the cruisers who had given up the hectic lifestyle of life ashore for awhile to enjoy life one day at a time. It was this kind of camaraderie and the unexpected adventures that made our trip especially worthwhile and unforgettable.

Though most of the cruising was lots of fun, one of the scarier times we had was on a 90 mile open water passage across the banks from

Chub Key in the Berry Islands back to Bimini. Accurate weather forecasts are hard to come by in the Bahamas. We made a mistake in interpreting the weather for that day and started our crossing in 15 to 20 knots of wind that over the next few hours grew to at least 40 knots. The boat was doing hull speed down wind in the dark with the last reef tied in half! There were 5' to 7' breaking seas and the boat was surfing regularly. Moreover, the skipper was too sea sick to steer after 10 hours, and his mate (and brave wife) came through like a trooper and drove "Little Cruiser" into a foot of water near Bonefish Hole after 17 hours of rough sailing. "Little Cruiser" performed flawlessly and it just goes to show you that most well designed boats can take more punishment than you can.

In retrospect, cruising in our micro cruiser allowed us to see many places that larger boats could not go, and being a little different IT opened up many doors. Two months of cruising taught us to look forward to each new day and the unplanned events added to the excitement and fulfillment of the trip. All in all, we found that the most important thing about cruising was just doing it.

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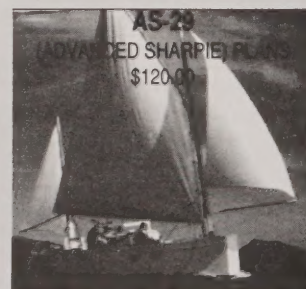
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# RIVERSWEST...

## a Solution to that "Where to Build my Boat?" Problem

By Bob Young

It's tough to find a place to build a boat anymore. Garages and carports are full of garden tools. If you live in an apartment or condo, it is likely that zoning rules prohibit a "outlandish" activity like building a boat. If the build-your-own-boat spirit is to survive, a place is needed where building your own boat is not only possible but welcomed. RiversWest Small Craft Center, Inc., in Portland, OR, is such a place.

In early 1991 three people met to address the problem. Each had built several boats and knew of the logistical problems. Drawing also upon the organizational experience of the three, RiversWest Small Craft Center was formed as a not-for-profit, membership-supported educational corporation in Oregon.

RiversWest leased space in Portland's Oaks Park, a rare historic park on nearly 50 acres of the east bank of the Willamette River just 3 miles upstream from the heart of Portland. It is the home of one of the oldest amusement parks in the US and has been a popular picnic spot for Portland residents for over one hundred years.

The leased space (one bay of eight) is 1,200 square feet of covered raw space in a large equipment shed whose metal roof is 20-plus feet above ground. During the first months of 1992 a core group of members labored to change a rough gravel surface to a level plywood building floor. As new members came in, more materials were purchased. By April an attractive and salty front closed the RiversWest section of the storage building. Work continues, and improvements are being added to make it a proper boatbuilding space for members.

With the floor and front completed, RiversWest members may now lease space to build or repair their boats. Rent is based on the square footage used. Members supply their own tools. If help or advice is needed, other members with the necessary experience, talents, or tools are available to make sure the tasks get done.

Since September, 1992, RiversWest has conducted classes in taped seam construction, oar building, wood-working and boat building. Under construction is a 24-foot four-sweep yawl boat—the "Marietta Yawl" designed by Joseph C. Dobler, a frequent contributor to "The Ash Breeze". This modern taped-seam boat will be used to promote RiversWest membership and the building of a class of such boats for rowing competitions on local waters.

Building forms are now available for the construction of a "cosine wherry" and for a 15' strip-built kayak. A class is scheduled for early spring to build several Bolger designed 15' rowing/sailing craft. Drift boat kits are also available through RiversWest.

RiversWest will also host and sponsor other activities such as small craft cruises, "mess-about," model making, navigation classes, water-safety seminars, and woodworking workshops. Plans are underway to co-host the 15th Annual Portland Wooden Boat Show in September, 1993.

Another goal is to establish a boat livery where the public can rent a proper rowboat much as they were able to in the early days of Portland. Historic pictures show scores of rowing boats and canoes pulled up on river beaches with their owners relaxing with picnic baskets and nap blankets.

Future plans also include the establishment of a museum where small craft indigenous to the

Pacific Northwest can be displayed.

RiversWest membership is open to all who wish to "tread lightly on the water." Interested people are invited to visit the Oaks Park facility most anytime. Saturday mornings are a kind of "open house" when members and others drop in to see what is underway.

RiversWest Small Craft Center, Inc., is supported by its membership, gifts, and grants. Major benefits of membership are a quarterly newsletter, enrollment in various classes, eligibility for renting building space, and participation in other activities.

Yearly dues are \$25 for general membership and \$5 for youth membership, \$10 senior (65+), \$50 guarantor, and \$100 benefactor.

For more information contact RiversWest Small Craft Center, Inc., P.O. Box 82686, Portland, OR 97282, or call its President, Bob Young, at 503-636-7344.

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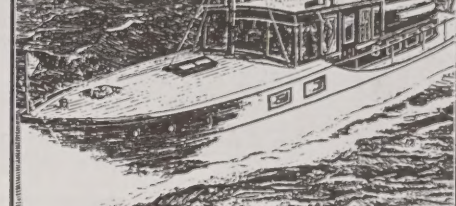
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# Back to the Future

## What Does Rowing Offer Today?

By Andre deBardelaben

This article is the text of a paper presented by the author at the 1992 USRA annual convention in Pittsburgh, PA. At that same gathering the USRA directors voted to disband the recreational rowing committee that had been set up a few years ago to encourage the sort of rowing activities discussed in this paper.

The message is that the USRA IS only interested in its serious competition level rowing activities and that recreational rowers should look elsewhere for formation of a national organization that would best serve their interests.

Andre deBardelaben designs rowing craft, operating as Middle Path Boats, Box 1881, Pittsburgh, PA 15221.

"In this country we also had many rowing clubs between 1860 and 1890 but as usual we rather went to extremes, so that the racing scull and shell were the most in vogue. This sort of craft was easily damaged and not fit to land on varied shores, so these defects rather interfered with their usefulness for a pleasant all day outing...It is strange so many Americans cannot visualize that there is a place between the racing scull and the heavy ill shaped rowboat of several hundred pounds, but a row in a boat that is of less than one hundred pounds' weight and about seventeen feet long can be most pleasant."

L. Francis Herreshoff, "The Common sense of Yacht Design"

Without question rowing is one of America's fastest growing sports. That's not surprising considering that only 20 years ago, outside of collegiate racing programs, the sport had almost no participants. Despite the phenomenal growth of recreational rowing, our sport is currently only a shadow of its former self. It's hard to believe that only a century ago rowing was America's favorite pastime! Only canoeing rivaled rowing in popularity. Everywhere there was water, rowers could be found. Nearly every waterfront park and hotel maintained a livery of rowing craft for the enjoyment of their guests. No picnic or regatta worth attending was complete without rowing races. The names of top caliber racing oarsmen were household words. Their achievements and disappointments made headlines in the popular press. It's probable that in the 1880's more money was wagered on rowing competitions than on horse racing. If our Victorian ancestors could view the modern rowing scene they might be moved to wonder what ever became of the sport.

Part of rowing's decline can be attributed to the introduction of other sports in the 1880's and '90's. Baseball was certainly more accessible to the masses, and bicycling was often more practical. The introduction of reliable internal combustion engines, outboard motors in particular, contributed greatly to rowing's decline. As professional watermen discovered that motors would allow them to operate bigger boats with smaller crews and bring in larger catches in less time for greater profits, rowing craft all but vanished from our fisheries. For

men who wrested their living from the sea, motors represented progress. That effect spilled over into recreational rowing. In the Gay 90's, America was poised to enter the new century. We were a country fascinated by anything new. Newness conferred status. And nothing symbolized newness like that technological wonder, the gasoline engine. Fashion demanded that every "serious" boater must have a motor.

At first boatbuilders simply modified well-formed rowing craft to accommodate outboards. Then, as the reliability of motors improved, boaters became indifferent to the rowing qualities of their craft. Gradually easily driven hull types evolved to the point where they were no longer efficient for rowing. By the time our grandfathers were able to afford their first "rowboats," rowing was indeed work! That impression has colored the public's perception of rowing ever since.

But the near demise of recreational rowing cannot be attributed entirely to outside influences. Another human-powered watersport, canoeing, managed to retain a fairly high level of popularity long after recreational rowing had all but died.

Why did such different fates befall these two similar sports? The answer is not simple, but what it boils down to is that one sport retained broad appeal through diversity and accessibility, while the other narrowed its focus to the point where nearly everyone who might have been interested was excluded.

By 1880 the canoeing community had established a well organized national governing body the American Canoe Association, whose primary goal was to popularize canoeing. With the understanding that racing is one of the most visible canoeing activities, one of the ACA's first acts was to standardize rules of competition. The rules were written so as to encourage the development of wholesome designs that would fully exploit all of the canoe's capabilities. As a result, at any one time from 1880 to the present, there have been hundreds of active canoe companies offering a wide variety of craft ranging from flatwater racing splinters to wide-bodied fishing craft, sleek wilderness cruising canoes to ultra-rugged white water canoes. The many different types of canoes were categorized and separated into classes so that anyone who wanted to enter their craft into competition would have a reasonable chance of winning. ACA sanctioned events have traditionally been well-advertised

and may include competitions in events as diverse as paddling, sailing and poling.

Realizing that not all paddlers would be interested in competition, the ACA devoted an equal amount of effort to promoting canoe cruising and to keeping alive the rich history of the sport. Perhaps what was most important, the ACA recognized the fact that most outdoors people are not by nature "joiners". Thus in order to encourage wider participation in canoeing, most ACA sanctioned events were open to members and non-members alike. Canoeing has prospered because it has expanded to include nearly every paddler's idea of fun and adventure, and canoe manufacturers have produced a wide range of craft so that paddlers can choose the right canoe for nearly any waters or conditions.

Compare this to the history of rowing in North America. Until recently, aside from collegiate athletic rules committees, rowing had no central governing body. The rules committees were mainly interested in organizing, scheduling, and structuring races. Being administrators, not boat designers or builders, the committeemen weren't overly concerned with the design or construction of the craft entered in those races. As might be expected in such a highly competitive environment, that oversight precipitated a fluvial version of the arms race. Competitors introduced all sorts of innovations in order to gain an advantage. Smoothwater speed became the primary design consideration; seaworthiness was secondary. Utility, practicality and affordability weren't even considered. In the face of skyrocketing equipment costs, no one made a serious attempt to keep these craft within reach of persons of modest means, and no separate class for affordable "citizens racers" was established. Ironically, after the simply rigged boats fell by the wayside, none of the remaining boats had a clear competitive advantage. Eventually racing craft became so specialized and expensive that only a few schools with well funded athletic programs could afford to compete.

As the twentieth century wore on, general interest in rowing continued to wane until outside of scholastic and collegiate rowing, almost all organized rowing came to be done by members of private clubs. With few exceptions the most active members of these clubs were the alumni and future alumni of Ivy league racing programs.



Not surprisingly, after a time, nearly all club racing came to be done in collegiate style racing shells. Persons of average means simply could not justify owning such expensive and impractical toys. Even if they could afford them, most would have had no place to store these long fragile craft because membership in rowing clubs was often restricted on the bases of race, religion, sex and social class. Anyone casually familiar with the history of rowing has heard the story of sculler Jack Kelly, Princess Grace's father and a gentleman by any reasonable definition, being denied the right to participate in several prestigious rowing events because he had once earned a living by working with his hands.

Even though most rowing organizations have since relaxed their social restrictions rowing retains a pronounced aspect of exclusivity. Sliding seat aficionados rarely blush when words like elite and upscale are used to describe their sport. There remains in the rowing community a sense that the masses should be elevated to the rowing class, instead of a feeling that rowing should be brought back to the people. Unlike sailing and paddling clubs, rowing clubs often resemble health spas. Not infrequently rowing clubs have the sound and atmosphere of army boot camp. New recruits are urged to immediately place rowing at the center of their lives with the implication that not to do so could have serious negative consequences. There is to be no initial "messaging about" phase. Tradition and the equipment will not allow it. What percentage of the population of a free society would submit to having its leisure time so tightly structured?

The plodding rate of growth of rowing can be attributed in large measure to the influence of collegiate racing shells on our perceptions and on the design of modern recreational craft. The skill and discipline that these craft demand determines who can and cannot operate them. The expense of their fittings determines who can afford them. And their limited adaptability to other pursuits diminishes their apparent value when compared to other types of sports equipment like bicycles, canoes, and cross country skis. In fact, the combined cost of all of these items is less than the price of a single rowing shell. The dramatic decline in the popularity of rowing over the first half of the 20th century is the legacy of the aristocratic "Old Boys" clubs that encouraged the development of narrow spectrum craft that could be readily and unmistakably distinguished from the more practical boats of the working class. This and the fact that until very recently there had been no national bodies actively promoting the full range of rowing craft types and activities is why there remain today only dim memories of the many reasons why rowing had once been so popular. A perusal of ads and articles in current rowing publications will turn up picture after picture of amazing sameness: sweaty bodies with grimacing faces in racers or pseudo-racers. Modern recreational rowing has been described as little more than recreational racing. Unfortunately, that's nearly the truth. Until that changes, rowing will not enjoy anything like the kind of broad based popularity that it once did.

A century ago racing was but one of many activities in which a rower might participate. Most modern rowers don't seem to know that there's anything else. If rowers are confined by unseaworthy craft to flat uninteresting waters, it's not surprising that so many of them seem to need to justify their participation in the sport by extolling its health virtues. It is also not surprising that they can think of no activity other than racing to maintain their interest. For most people fitness and racing are not reasons enough to take

up rowing. A fitness aspect certainly doesn't hurt the appeal of any sport, but racing will have only a limited effect on its widespread acceptance. Organized competition is an important part of many sports, but it has never been the mainstay of any popular participatory sport.

In order for a sport to become popular it must possess a healthy element of what the public perceives as fun. A fun activity is one that may reward excellence, but doesn't necessarily demand it. Racing rewards only the gifted and the dedicated; something most individuals are not and cannot be! There are other more practical, less costly and safer ways to fitness than rowing a boat. And some of us want to do more than just row, row, row our boats in preparation for race day. The reason why we row boats instead of stationary ergometers is to be out on the water where our spirits can be energized by a living environment where the only constant is change. As long as the flatwater racing shell remains the dominant influence on recreational rowing craft design, most of what the rowing experience has to offer will remain beyond the limits of our craft's capabilities.

How many times have we heard about races being cancelled due to "normal" conditions? Why should rowers be forced to head for shore just because the power boaters have ruffled the surface of the lake? Is the fact that the local river is narrow and serpentine any reason not to take up rowing? What if the only body of water nearby is an ocean? How many urbanites have the space, or access to boathouses where they can conveniently store 25' boats? These are questions that recreational rowers and industry professionals should be asking themselves. It's amazing how many people, after trying out a modern rowing shell, come away thinking that it was more interesting to think about than to actually do. If we hope to share the joys of rowing with a wider range of individuals, there must be a wider range of craft available to accommodate a wider range of lifestyles.

It's time that some of the organizations that purport to represent rowing realize that there are reasons to row other than racing and fitness and that most of the interesting places where a rowing craft might go are beyond the reach of anything resembling a flatwater shell. Rowing does not need to be justified, and all forms of rowing in all types of craft are healthy. Aside from being a ritual of asceticism rowing can both relax and fun. And the price of enjoyment doesn't have to be diminished excitement, performance or a less than optimum pulse rate. Everyone acknowledges the value of exercise, but most people find it more appealing in the disguise of fun and adventure.

At the peak of rowings' popularity, cruising was by far the most popular pastime. Rowers would actually travel in their boats. These adventures would last anywhere from a few hours to several weeks. The most famous account of a nineteenth century rowing cruise is H.D. Thoreau's contemplative book, "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers". On their adventure the Thoreau brothers encountered conditions ranging from mirror smooth mill ponds to class 2 whitewater.

Oar power figured into nearly every part of nineteenth century American life, including the opening of the American West. In 1869 J.W. Powell, a one-armed Civil War veteran, led an expedition of 10 men in 4 rowing craft to become the first white men to explore the Grand Canyon segment of the Colorado River. Even now, that section, replete with 20' high standing waves, is

approached with utmost respect and caution by world class kayakers.

Unlike racing, almost anyone can enjoy cruising regardless of age, physical condition, or geographical location. In order to be successful at racing rowers must be willing and able to devote large amounts of their leisure time to developing and maintaining a "perfect stroke". Cruising requires only a "good enough" stroke. Just how good "good enough" is, depends on the cruising grounds. By carefully choosing trips within their abilities, rowers can begin enjoying cruising from the very first day.

The greatest obstacle to modern-day rowers who might want to take up cruising is finding suitable boats. For most of the twentieth century, U.S. boatbuilders have produced only two types of rowing craft: chunky dinghies suitable only for shuttling passengers and provisions short distances to and from larger craft moored offshore, and super-specialized, fragile and expensive racing shells. It's time that situation changed. When was the last time you enjoyed the refreshing splash of spindrift as your craft soared from wavecrest to wavecrest in steep wind-driven seas? Have you ever carefully guided your boat through thundering whitewater or pounding surf? Would you be comfortable taking an extended voyage in your rowing craft? And when was the last time you thought of the towering wake of a freighter as part of the fun? A cruise in the wrong boat can be anything from uncomfortable to terrifying!

In the past, every region of the country developed its own types of boats specifically designed to meet the demands of local conditions. The range of models available to Victorian Era rowers was actually greater than that available to their paddling contemporaries. Sadly modern American rowers don't have as many choices. Though our ancestors would have known of flatwater racing shells, they would have viewed them the same way that modern drivers view top-fuel dragsters: as craft that exhibit superior speed over short distances in a narrow range of conditions. Just as dragsters cannot be considered to be truly road-worthy, racing shells have neither the range, seaworthiness, transportability, ruggedness, maneuverability or capacity for comfortable touring.

Growing numbers of Americans are beginning to ask for more from their rowing craft. Rowers are again testing their skill and courage on America's rough and tumble western rivers. Tourists can even book passage on dories for a heart stopping ride through the Grand Canyon. On the East and West Coasts, there is rising interest in offshore racing. Some of these races are so long and cover so much area that navigational skills have become almost as important as oarsmanship. A number of talented designers have responded to that trend by offering designs better suited to the harsher conditions of an unprotected environment. Some of the new offshore racers are little more than shortened up, broadened up, softened up, beefed up, sealed-up versions of flatwater racing shells with little capacity for cruising gear, still demanding a relatively high level of skill and concentration that cannot be comfortably maintained over a long period of time or distance. Though rowers have taken cruises in these open water shells, to see them with piles of touring gear lashed to their decks is almost comical, rather like seeing Indy cars towing trailers. We expect modern touring cars to be fast, efficient, comfortable, roomy and safe. We should expect no less from modern rowing cruisers.

Strangely enough, to find examples on which to base the designs of future rowing



cruisers, we should look to the past. A visit to one of several excellent maritime history museums (Adirondack Museum, Mystic Seaport Museum, Thousand Islands Museum) will turn up an amazing variety of rowing craft and make us painfully aware of how much our sport has lost over the years. Contrary to what many "experts" would have us believe, not all of the rowing craft of the past were heavy, blunt-ended and slow. Anyone who has rowed a St. Lawrence skiff or Adirondack Guide Boat will tell you that it wasn't so. Nor were these deckless craft unseaworthy. These craft routinely operated in conditions that would keep most modern recreational shells shorebound. The rough water capabilities of Rangeley Lakes boats and Maine Coast peapods are legendary.

Aside from the well-studied and documented workboats mentioned above, there was also an almost forgotten class of lighter, sleeker craft called "pleasure" rowboats. Because they were not intended to carry extremely heavy loads, pleasure rowboats were less stoutly built and modelled on finer lines than their working cousins. Typically, these clipperized boats ranged between 14' and 18' in length, with overall beams from 2 1/2' to 4'. Though these beams may seem broad by rowing shell standards, their actual waterline beams were much narrower than their overall beams. The underwater shapes, and therefore the smoothwater glide characteristics, of many pleasure rowboats would compare favorably with those of many modern recreational shells of comparable lengths.

Underwater shape is, above all other factors, the prime determiner of a boat's flatwater performance. Speed is a function of length. The longer a rowing boat is at the waterline the faster it will go. Every displacement (non-planing) boat has a built-in speed limit called hull speed. Hull speed can be thought of as a kind of threshold of inefficiency. Any velocity up to hull speed can be reached and maintained with a reasonable expenditure of energy. The amount of additional energy required rises exponentially for each additional tenth of a knot beyond hull speed.

That fact would seem to favor extremely long hulls, but long hulls that span several waves in short, choppy seas are more difficult to handle in some of the conditions that a touring boat might face. Coastal rowing experiments have shown that short, easily handled boats often outperform longer, sleeker craft in high winds and waves. Whether the conditions are blustery or calm, on unfamiliar waters excessive speed can be dangerous to persons better positioned to see where they've been than where they're going. Also cruising boats sometimes have to operate on restricted waterways. Under those circumstances a shorter, more maneuverable boat is preferable to a longer stiffer-tracking one.

While length is the primary determiner of a boat's smoothwater speed, its acceleration is most affected by hull form, friction, and displacement (weight of boat, passengers, and gear). At the lower end of its efficient speed range, up to 80% of the resistance that even a smoothly fitting boat meets will be caused by friction. As a boat accelerates towards hull speed, its shape (or form) becomes an increasingly important factor in its rate of acceleration. The finer a boat's underwater shape the quicker it will accelerate. By the time a boat reaches hull speed, form resistance will be substantially greater than frictional resistance. In collegiate or Olympic flatwater races, which are really just sprints, a few extra pounds of hull weight can spell the difference between winning and losing. As long as weight is kept within reason, cruising

rowers shouldn't be overly concerned about weight. A little extra weight might even be helpful in preventing a boat from being blown around by the wind, and the increased momentum will improve its glide between strokes when rowing against headseas.

Just as a boat's flatwater performance is largely determined by its underwater shape, its rough water capability is most strongly influenced by its above water shape. Almost without exception, the hulls of most pleasure rowboats showed pronounced flare above the waterline. That is, their gunwales overhung the water by several inches. These outward sloping sides are the ideal shape for turning away beam seas. And if the flare is carried forward to the bow, as was common in most boats of the past, it will tend to make a boat rise over steep head seas rather than piercing them as do many of today's hotter shells. It doesn't take a genius to figure out that a boat that rides on top of the waves will handle better than one with a hundred pounds of water on deck. Because their flared topsides made them dry runners, pleasure rowboats didn't need, and usually weren't given decks. This openness facilitated the stowing of cruising gear and/or the carrying of passengers.

There were other important consequences to be realized by incorporating flare into the design of cruising craft. First, flare gives a boat a strong righting moment which means that it will naturally resist capsizing. More than one incautious boater has been pleasantly surprised to learn that well-designed cruising craft are often more stable when heeled than when upright. Righting moment is the same force that helps unballasted sailboats resist being blown over by the wind.

That flare increases a boat's beam actually works to the rower's benefit. A wide hull can make do with short riggers or possibly even get along without them. Under favorable conditions the anxiety of coming alongside docks, seawalls, or other craft seems to rise in direct proportion to the number of inches the riggers extend beyond the hull. On heaving water or in unfamiliar surroundings (as when touring) the rise in anxiety per inch of rigger protrusion seems exponential. Because they were rarely outfitted with oars much longer than 8 feet most pleasure rowboats with beams of 40 inches or greater simply had their oarlock sockets mounted directly onto the gunwales. Such boats almost never had sliding seats. Out of necessity the narrowest pleasure rowboats did utilize various types of riggers in order to gain a reasonable spread between the oarlocks and some, called "exercise wherries", were outfitted with sliding seats; but for the sake of simplicity, safety, reliability, and efficiency, most narrow boats that were used primarily for touring were fitted with the shortest practical riggers and fixed seats.

Well designed boats of moderate length can easily be kept moving at or just below hull speed without the aid of long, racing-type sculls or sliding seats. Any additional power that might be gained through the use of a sliding seat would result in only an incremental increase in speed. Because large powerful, pumping leg muscles burn tremendous amounts of calories, that small boost in speed would be achieved at a great cost of the rower's energy. The shorter the boat's waterline length and chunkier its underwater shape, the greater the cost. Fitness rowers, intent on getting the most exercise in a relatively short period of time over a relatively short distance, burn calories at an extravagant rate. Cruising rowers who might travel up to 50 miles per day must often conserve their energy just to complete the day's run.

While sliding seat rowing may be an efficient and enjoyable form of exercise, it is not, in its use of human energy, an efficient mode of transportation. The oft heard claim that sliding seat rowing is the only single exercise that alone provides a full body workout can be convincingly challenged by cross country skiers and the owners of several types of ergometers. Even if it were true it's pedantic because rowers, like most outdoors people are likely to participate in a variety of other sports like cycling, tennis or running so that it's unlikely that any of their major muscle groups will suffer from underuse. Refusing to row any boat not equipped with a sliding seat on those grounds is like refusing to eat any meal that does not contain 100% of the RDA of every nutrient. The same benefits may be derived from taking a brisk hike exploring some fascinating landfall at the end of an extended row in a fixed seat craft.

When cruising near good roads close to large population centers, how a boat is outfitted is usually not critical. In remote areas where a rower may not be able to summon help in case of an equipment failure, simpler, more robust fixed seat rigging has several advantages over sliding seat rigs. Failures in fixed seat rigging are extremely rare and room can easily be found in every cruisers kit for a spare of every component (oarlock, socket, oar) of a fixed seat rowing apparatus. Repairs to such equipment can usually be made with tools commonly found on multi-bladed pocket knives.

In addition, the long sculls commonly associated with sliding seat rowing can be both a nuisance and a liability to the touring rower. Standard sculls with their combined length of nearly 20 feet would severely limit the touring rower's access to narrow, restricted waterways. Creeks and coves often hold the most interesting scenery and safest anchorages, and there's much to be said for the privacy such places afford. Also, because 9 1/2 to 10 foot sculls enter the water at extremely low angles their grips and looms are almost always in close proximity to various parts of the rowers anatomy. That geometry can dangerously interfere with skying the oars over high, closely spaced waves. "Rowing over stumps" may be poor flatwater technique, but having that capability can save your life when the going gets really rough! To cruising rowers concepts like "the perfect stroke" are so much esoterica if they won't get you where you want to go when you want to go.

Because of their typically corky natures, most pleasure rowboats wouldn't require that a rower use his oars for stability while resting in choppy water. In general, these boats were extremely tolerant of less than perfect handling, which means they are excellent craft for children, handicapped persons, and novices (This topic deserves an article of its own).

Reproduced today by modern or classical building methods pleasure rowboat designs would have many practical advantages over modern racers and rec-racers both on and off the water. Their moderate lengths would make them easier to carry and store than the longer racers. That last point should be given careful consideration by anyone thinking of buying a boat, because all of the materials commonly used in the construction of rowing craft hulls are adversely affected by prolonged exposure to sunlight. Because they would overhang the bumpers of today's shorter cars less than pure racers, pleasure rowboats would be safer to transport in heavy urban traffic. And because they're similar in size to most canoes, they would weigh about the same as canoes (16' Adirondack Guide boats weighed about 60 lbs.).



It should be noted that the rise of fitness rowing from a near zero level of interest to its present level of popularity was due to the introduction in the early 70's of 16' rowing shells that were slower, heavier and less sophisticated in their rigging than collegiate racing shells. The unprecedented success of these shells in the marketplace was due as much to their differences from thoroughbred flatwater racers as to their similarities. In their favor the new shells had enhanced ruggedness, seaworthiness, handiness and affordability. That has to be seen as a positive step. Taking another step or two down the evolutionary ladder could widen the market even further. From a manufacturing standpoint a molded deck is a second hull often more complex in shape than the true hull. Because they have no decks it's probable that pleasure rowboats would be less expensive to build in comparable materials than decked shells of similar size. Presumably the savings would be reflected in their selling prices. Being deckless and having sturdy gunwales, pleasure rowboats could be cartopped upside down as easily as canoes. Finally, pleasure rowboats would make superior exercise boats as they could be safely rowed in a broader range of conditions than many of today's racier shells. With the ready availability of drop-in sliding seat rigs these craft could provide the best that both fixed and sliding seat rowing have to offer.

These are only some of the advantages of rowing craft of an earlier day. Notice that I did not call them traditional craft. In their heyday they were state of the art boats. They were built to the limits of existing technology and their designs were constantly evolving to meet the demands of the prevailing conditions of the waters where they were used. Technological advances have enabled modern builders to produce craft in a far wider range of shapes than our ancestors could ever have dreamed. Yet, American rowers find themselves in the position of having to choose between many versions of essentially one type of boat, one that is only incrementally better than a type that was rightly thought of as extreme and impractical a century ago.

In all fairness, some designers and manufacturers have tried to offer Americans alternatives to traditional decked rowing shells only to discover that doing so was risky business. Why aren't these alternatives to single purpose rowing craft more successful in the marketplace? The memory of versatile, able, user-friendly cruising craft has faded from public consciousness, and the image of the collegiate racing shell has been branded in its place so that many rowers aren't sure whether cruising under oars is possible. Many rowers, having had no personal experience with the type, question the safety of undecked rowing craft. Such craft have undergone thousands of years of refinement and have many safe open water passages, and several ocean crossings to their credit.

The prevalence of decked rowing craft on American rivers owes more to fashion than to any concern for safety. Any honest salesman will tell you that nothing moves boats faster on the showroom floor than predatory styling. Any designer can tell you that almost nothing compromises the performance of a cruising boat (row, sail or power) more than the desire to give it a racy appearance. Since boats of moderate length can never have the calm water glide of true racing shells, why don't we optimize them to do what they can do better than racing shells, which is just about everything else?

Choosing a cruiser over a single purpose racer does not automatically preclude the

possibility of racing. There is no good reason why owners of rowing cruisers should be denied the thrill of competition. Matched up against rowers in boats of similar capabilities they would experience the same rush of excitement that rowers in more specialized craft do. Indeed racing between cruising craft could be far more exciting than traditional collegiate and Olympic style racing because the races could be run on more varied and challenging venues.

Inspired initially in the 60's and 70's by articles on historical rowing craft by John Gardner in "The National Fisherman" and nudged along thereafter by articles in "Small Boat Journal" and "WoodenBoat" magazines, classical rowing is experiencing a healthy upsurge in popularity. I expect that someday cruising rowers will come to represent the mainstream of rowing in this country. Many of these rowers have crossed over from other sports. Some are canoeists who've discovered that oarpower would allow them to ascend more powerful rivers or traverse large bodies of water more efficiently than paddling. Others are aging, slightly creaky backpackers who find that rowing permits them to continue their self-reliant wanderings in greater comfort with fewer physical stresses. Some are fitness rowers who've tired of a routine drained of all adventure.

Still others have simply discovered how much fun this type of rowing can be. Whatever their reasons, there are considerable numbers of people currently exploring America's rivers, lakes and bays in simply rigged, open rowing craft. Their numbers are difficult to pin down because as a group they are not well organized, and their outings are usually not widely publicized. Manufacturing statistics don't accurately reflect the numbers of cruising craft in existence because many are lovingly preserved or restored antiques, and a large percentage of these rowers seem to enjoy the challenge of building their own boats. The professional shops that specialize in new construction of these kinds of craft are without exception small companies that are often not diligent about reporting their output to industry monitors like the National Marine Manufacturers Association.

It is known that thousands of cruising rowers subscribe to regional publications like "Messing About in Boats". And in the 1970's when the U.S. Coast Guard proposed some highly restrictive, ill conceived small craft regulations, hundreds of these rowers joined together to form the Traditional Small Craft Association and successfully defeated these measures. As a designer I have personally corresponded with hundreds of people seeking advice on cruising craft. Many of these people have told me that they own or have owned rowing shells. Time and again they have described how confining these craft are to their wanderings. More than once have they told me that the USRA has not been understanding of or sensitive to their plight.

The purpose of this article is not to bash the USRA or to declare that the flatwater racing shell has doomed our sport. Nearly every sport is comprised of various factions each with its own technical and philosophical approach. But rarely are these factions so blithely oblivious or disdainful of the others outside of their niche as the shell proponents seem to be of the rest of the rowing community. Compared to some other sports the entire rowing community is small. All rowers must unite and support each other in order to safeguard our common interests. If we are serious about increasing the number of people enjoying any and all facets of our sport, then we need to embrace and accommodate everyone who might want to participate. History has shown

that any group or organization that fails to grasp and endorse this policy will have little influence or importance to anyone beyond itself.

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# Tom's Coast of New England

## Being an Account of a Cruise Along the New England Coast

### Aboard the Vessel "The Damn Foole II"

The Author admits to free and blatant pilferage from "Carter's Coast of New England."

We found it too spacious and stationary. We didn't sleep well. The spirits and I paced the floor. The Professor explained a bit of lore of the Island's name. A small band of natives occupied one half of the island while the other half was settled by a small religious group. All went well till the minister tried to convert the natives. They had a confrontation.

"We do not worship a god," the natives said, "for he slaughters every living creature from the tiniest to the greatest with seeming indifference. He is the greatest mass murderer known to us. We are subjected to unnessary suffering and pain as well as death. This is evil. And if he designed, created and determined this, then he is evil. Evil can only be associated with the devil. We will not worship the devil obsequies as you do."

The minister, in a fury, drove the natives from the island for, as he declared, "They were as beyond God's reach." The natives, henceforth, referred to the place as the island of the devil."

"Where do you get all this information?" The Waterman asked the Professor.

"I used to read a lot," The professor answered. "Now I dont bother reading at all. I just make everything up."

Next morning we found the boat high up on the beach leaning against a rock with the chain and mushroom beside it. Over a long period of time the chain had wrapped itself around the shaft of the mushroom, shortening itself. At high tide the boat pulled the mushroom off the bottom and all floated ashore. Again the boat demonstrated it's intelligence by picking a convenient rock and gently leaning against it. I rowed an anchor out into deeper water and waited for the tide to float us.

Our host, apoligizing profusely, gave us a sumptuous breakfast and waved goodbye as we sailed swiftly away waving back at that small angelic group on Devils Island. We made our way eastward down the Deer Island Thorofare We sailed through the sinuous York Narrows and Casco Passage across Blue Hill Bay to Bass Harbor head where a narrow inlet permitted us to round the southern headland of Mount Desert Island and make our way up the Western Way between great Cranberry Island and Sutton

Island, across Frenchmans Bay to Winter Harbor on the Schoodic Peninsula.

While anchored in Winter Harbor, we noticed a sign on shore. "Absolutely No Trespassing," provoking a discussion on property. "Our laws have finally forbidden us to occupy the planet," the Professorexplained, "Everything is owned by this vampirish system of banks and real estate agents."

"Till now every dollar we make is paid out to a criminal system of loans," the Pilot said.

"All loans should be abolished and everyone who occupies property should own it," the Artist protested.



"Unthinkable!" the Piscatologist exclaimed.

"It's been done in the past. We've been educated to accept this selfishly insane economic system of debts, loans, and serfdom. Originally the property was obtained by force of arms. Which is theft. Tom Paine said, "Authority and property which is obtained by force of arms is not legitimate and should be discontinued the moment force of arms cannot sustain it."

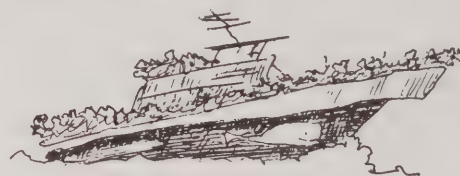
"Instead we pay homage to kings and governments and uphold the rights of property," the Professor said. Needless to say we didn't go ashore and long into the night declamatory shouting emanated from the boat.

From Winter Harbor the next day, we beat past Mark Island at the harbor's entrance, rounded Turtle Island and sailed out into the expanse of



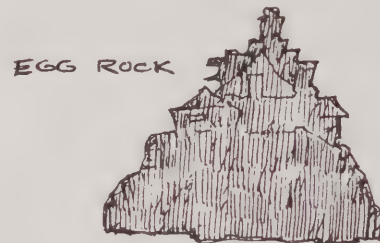
TURTLE ISL.

Frenchmans Bay. A whale watching boat headed for us seemingly for lack of something to gawk at. Now we knew how whales felt being chased and stared at. We bobbed in the wake of the ship as it circled us than sped away looking for something else to gawk at.



WHALE BOAT

Along the shore of Mount Desert, beneath Mt. Champlain, we passed one of the ubiquitous Egg Rocks that lie along the coast of Maine.



EGG ROCK

"The name told the shore people where to collected birds eggs," the Piscatologist told us.

We continued with a fine breeze outside of the Thumbcap Island between the impressively high Ironbound and Porupine Islands into Bar



PORUPINE ISL.

Harbor. We anchored near the Club. Immediately the club launch came out to tell us we were too close to their comittee boat. They wouldn't like us to be banging into it. They offered us a free mooring further inside the harbor. The crew immediately complained of the long row to shore. I reminded them of the short row at Stonington where we almost lost the boat.



The Professor stayed aboard trying to listen to the ballgame on the radio, but the boat, swinging at anchor, varied the reception so he would lose the sound at critical moments leaving him cursing like a true sports fan. Why an educated man would listen to grown men playing children's games is beyond me.

BALLGAME



Ashore, the Artist went to a public exhibition in the park, telling them no doubt they were doing everything wrong. The Professor found the library closed and complained that they were always closed whenever anyone wanted to use them.

I carried our dirty clothes in two sailbags to the laundromat. While they washed I rented a bicycle and rode over the island. I came back exhausted, grateful that the end of trip was down hill or I would never have made it back. The spirits asked why I was back so soon "The bicycle got tired," I replied.



"We're running low on money again. How the hell do you make money?" I asked. "One month out and I spent \$200 and haven't made a cent. We're left with not enough for a meal or a mooring. What should I do?" "You'll have to sell the boat," the crew suggested. I went ashore and told other boaters my boat was for sale. When I came back aboard that night I found a note saying, "I am interested in buying your boat."

I met the buyer next morning at a coffee shop. I told him the price was \$2000 or best offer. I started describing the boat. He said he had been aboard and examined it when he had left the note. He took out a note book which had listed everything that was wrong with it. He then complained of all the work he would have to do.

"Working on a boat is fun," I told him. "I should charge you for all the fun you'll have fixing it up."

"I don't fix up boats."

"Then every true boater has friends who'll do the work for the sheer joy of it."

"How's the motor?" he asked.

"What motor? It's a sailboat. Doesn't need a motor."

"It should have a motor."

"If you want to motor around, buy a car. We've been sitting here talking for an hour and you've never said what your willing to pay for the boat." "Well I know a fellow who bought a boat like yours for \$1200 with a motor, loran, depth finder, etc."

"Cut out the bullshit and make an offer."

"Now don't get mad when I do."

"I'm mad already."

"I couldn't possibly offer any more than \$700."

"Bullshit."

"Don't get mad," he said.

"Why shouldn't I get mad?"

"Well, why don't we talk about sailing?"

"I'm through talking."

Later that night we cast off the mooring and rowed to another spot in the harbor. A pram came out of the dark and said, "Hello Tom."

Still irritated and with a slight suspicion who it was, I said, "Who the hell are you?"

"I'm the fellow who offered to buy your boat. Why don't you come aboard my boat for a drink."

I didn't like him but I was curious to see his boat and maybe drink his booze. When I finished anchoring I climbed aboard his pram and we rowed over to a 30+ Lugens. Once aboard he talked about his trip down the inland waterway to Florida.

"Why the hell did you want to buy my boat when you have this thing?" I asked.

"Well, a group of Typhoon owners are getting together to form a racing club and I thought I'd join them."

Even with this plausible explanation I still regarded him as a used car dealer. Buy cheap and sell dear.

"That's how you make money," the spirit crew told me later.

"Money is not related to anything, work, thought, productivity, creativeness. It is acquired now by some mysterious paper pushing process," the Professor said. "The people here have already made their money. This is the new breed."

I brought out the rum for the last time which the Assyrian reported immediately in the log for the last time. We toasted the end of the cruise. Each crew member in turn told me what they thought of me, all being in agreement that I was the biggest pain in the ass they ever had the misfortune to sail with. I laughed idiotically as the descriptions got worse. They eventually gave up, realizing that no one could penetrate the shell of stupidity that encased me. We sat in silence and drank.

I related the story of the Caliph of Abdalrahman, the Mightiest Moorish Monarch of Spain. "He declared at the close of his life that he hadn't enjoyed one damn moment of it. As for my part, being not quite that hard to please I admitted enjoying some moments of the cruise despite the problems and disappointments and constant bitching. The Professor, Pilot, Piscatologist, Waterman and Artist grudgingly agreed that many happy days befell our lot, but, as with the poor people of Spain under the domination of the Caliph, the happiest was that day when they would leave the vessel and forever rid themselves of my insufferable presence. Whereupon the spirit crew left, leaving me alone with my insufferable self."

Conclusion



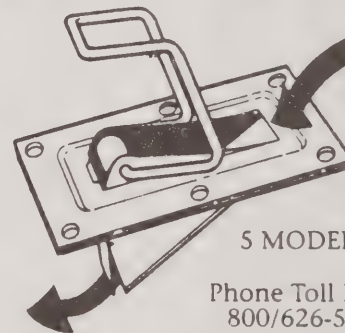
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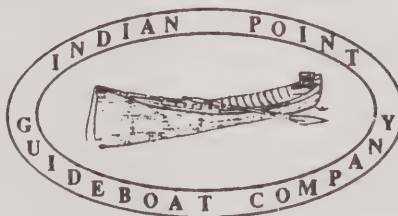
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# BUILDING "TOAD HALL"

*a building journal in 12 parts*

by David N. Goodchild

Part 8

## THE RIG

### COLD-MOULDED SPARS

I am a crew member of the oldest and largest, wooden, square-rigged vessel still sailing on a regular basis in the world today. This is the "Gazela of Philadelphia", previously known as the "Gazela Primiero". She is a Barkentine of 177' overall, carrying a course, lower topsail, upper topsail and t'gallent on her foremast.

I was already thinking about "Toad" in 1988 when we were down-rigging the vessel for the winter, and while bringing down the yards, (some of which weighed over a ton), and carrying them with many willing hands to their storage yard, it occurred to me that a much lighter and even stronger spar could be built by cold-moulding veneers over an X-frame. Needless to say, the Philadelphia Ship Preservation Guild was not interested in replacing "Gazela"'s spars with cold-moulded versions, and this idea would lay dormant until it came time to think carefully about the rig for "Toad".

I started out with the original idea. I laminated up a 24' long X-member from 1/4" plywood, with the idea of tapering it to the original boat's pole mast dimensions. I first ripped enough yellow pine to make a 24' long 1" square center core. This I dadoed to take the ply. I inserted the 1/4" ply pieces into this dado, cutting the mating ends at an angle to spread the stresses. I let it set up for a couple of days, and then was ready to taper it prior to laminating the veneers.

Here's where I started to become disenchanted with this method. Understand, I am not disenchanted with the method in general, and for another boat it should prove very useful, but I had subsequently decided that I wanted to be able to reef the topmast to reduce the overall mast height to just below 20' in order to pass under most bridges. In addition, it was clear that tapering the X-member was going to prove troublesome.

Something else was needed!

We had recently re-zoned the house to both improve the heating output and reduce oil consumption. In the process, we had re-routed some waste lines and there was some PVC left over and lying around.

Ah Hah!

If I used the PVC, I could reef the topmast by telescoping it down into the main mast! This I certainly couldn't do with the X-member in place, since it would be in the way. The mast wouldn't be tapered, but I could live with that, especially since I would be able to devise a simple tackle to lower the topmast down into the main mast easily and quickly. Besides, for gaff rig, a non-tapered mast would provide better bearing aloft for the gaff saddle.

I knew that Schedule 40 PVC was strong, since I had used it for the rudder tube, and in testing, it was very clear that the material was tough indeed. It was strong, but in long lengths it was as limp and whippy as a tired Casanova! How to fix that?

Referring back to the rudder tube construction in Part 5, it will be remembered that I steamed Maple veneer and glued it to the tube with contact cement, since this is the only glue which will adhere to PVC. I planned to use the same method to stiffen up the mast and spars. I knew that after I had laminated several layers of veneer over this first contact-cemented layer, and epoxied it all together I would have a very stiff and strong spar. And this is what developed.

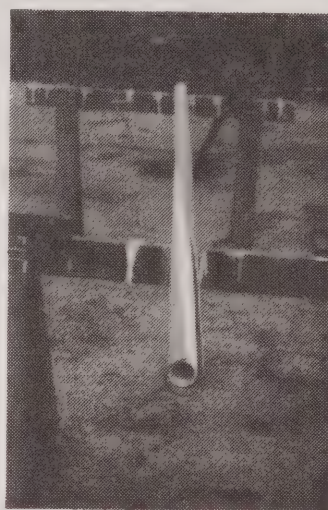
I went to my plumbing supply store and bought a 10 foot length of 1 1/4" Schedule 40 PVC. When I got it home I set up the steam-box. The steam-box is needed, because the 1/16" veneer needs to be steamed first to achieve a close approximation to the diameter of the pipe in the small diameters used for the bowsprit, boom, etc. After it achieves this curve, it is then easy to coat with the cement or epoxy and roll it on to the PVC.

I had previously ordered 500 square feet (their minimum order) of 1/16" Douglas Fir veneers from the Dean Company in Gresham, Oregon. I could have used 1/16" Sitka Spruce, but they only offer short lengths of

this and the 1/8" Spruce was a little too thick for easy bending to tight radii. The Fir veneers were beautiful! Absolutely clear with a fine grain.

Building the spars was easy.

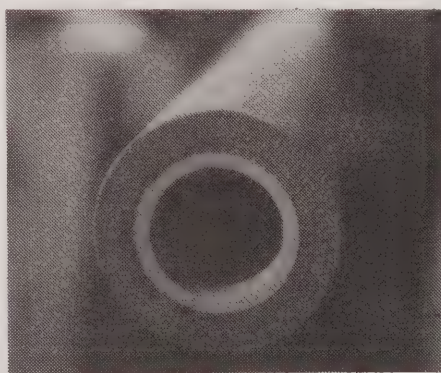
I started with the Mizzen Mast. After contact-cementing the first layer, I laminated up the additional layers with epoxy. I used 4 laminations of 1/16" veneer for a total thickness to the mast wall of 7/16". This is consistent with established scantlings for "built" masts of approximately 1/5 of the mast diameter as given in such diverse references as Kinney's "Skene's Elements of Yacht Design", Nicholson's "Boat Data Book" and "Buehler's Backyard Boatbuilding".



*Wrapping the Veneers*

One quarter inch of this mast wall is the veneer and the other 3/16" is the Schedule 40 PVC. This resulted in a mast diameter of 2 1/4". (The dimension of the PVC pipe is I.D., so a 1 1/4" pipe measures 1 5/8" OD, plus an additional 1/4" wall thickness of veneer for a total of 2 1/4 inches OD.). When I had finished the laminations of the mast, it was stiffer than my dinghy mast which was of equivalent dimension but built up in the conventional manner.

I had previously tested out the stiffness of the smaller diameter



*The Laminations*

PVC/veneer combination with excellent results. Even the 1 1/4" PVC could support my weight with just two veneers applied. It bent certainly, but the comparison with the unstiffened PVC was dramatic. Also, the spars were very light, much lighter (and, I think much stronger) than their original solid counterparts.

The photograph above shows the construction, with the four veneers wrapped around the PVC core. I had originally thought that I would have to insert a piece of metal pipe into the PVC in order to stiffen up the flexible pipe so that it would be straight enough to apply the veneers. I found however, that the act of clamping and gluing a cylinder of 1/16"



*Finished  
Mizzen Mast*



veneers around the pipe straightened it up immediately. When finished, the mast was absolutely straight.

The Mizzen Mast is not tapered since the Main Mast is not tapered.

I am very enthusiastic about this method of mast construction. The naked PVC can be bent to 90 degrees without damage, the pipe walls can be compressed in a vise until they touch without damage, and the walls can be repeatedly hammered with a heavy sledge without damage. I know this because I have conducted all of these tests. I very much like the idea



*Fitting the Seam*

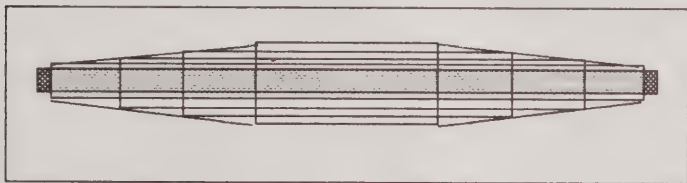
of this very tough flexible core living inside a stiff, strong and beautiful outer shell. While I am not an engineer, I feel very strongly that this combination creates a very effective spar. Should the worst happen, it is reassuring to know that there is a mast which even if the outer veneers are fractured, has a second line of defense in the PVC. It might be whippy, but it will be there!

I had also been concerned about just how I was going to be able to get a good seam upon wrapping the veneers. This also proved simple. By wrapping the veneers around the mast, squeezing it together and marking it, one can run a small block plane down the edge until the edges just meet upon being squeezed around the spar.

## TAPERING A MAST

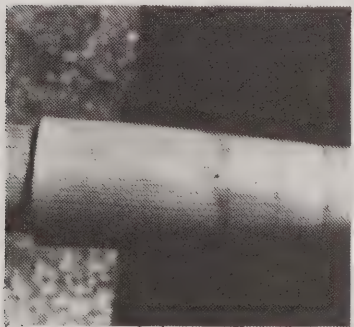
While I chose not to taper this mast because I wanted to telescope the topmast and step the mainmast inside the stub mast tube, it is easy to do and I will do this with the course yard. In fact there are three ways that these cold-moulded masts can be tapered.

One simple means of tapering a spar would be to apply the veneers in



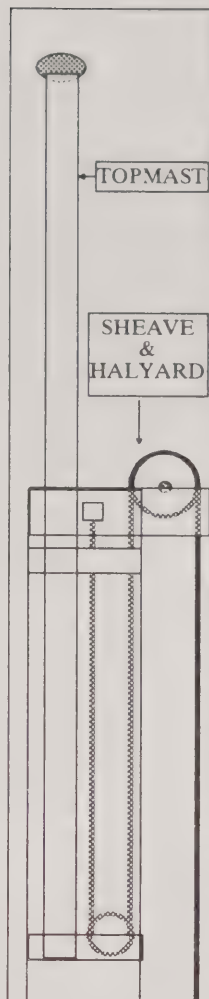
*The Tapering Procedure (Exaggerated View)*

ever-shortening lengths as shown in the drawing below. The first layer of veneer, is applied from the heel to the truck. The second layer is applied from the heel to a distance below the truck. Additional layers are applied from the heel to an equal distance below the previous layers. This is simple, but probably not acceptable. A modification of this is to simply sand the ridges where the veneers end. This softens the transitions and this is the procedure I used to make the bolster for the Hounds Band on the Mizzen Mast. I applied three layers of veneer and sanded them to a soft transition as shown in the photograph to the left.



*Hounds Bolster*

The third method is the one I will use for the Course Yard. Once these first layers are on, (and there would be enough to build up the bunt and the yardarm to their respective design dimensions for the taper), then an additional covering layer is epoxied from the bunt to the yardarm using a thickened epoxy glue for the adhesive. This will result in a nicely tapered yard with a very smooth outer skin. This is shown in the exaggerated drawing above.



*Topmast Details  
(Not to Scale)*

## THE REEFING TOPMAST

The means by which the topmast telescopes down in the main mast is shown at left. On the mast band at the truck, a block is fitted between the two cramping tangs. Attached to the bottom fifth of the top mast are metal fittings welded up from scrap steel, which guide the topmast down into the main mast and keep it vertical when hoisted. The end of the topmast halyard fastens to the upper hounds band. The topmast extends down into the main mast for a distance equal to its projection above. To lower the topmast into the main mast, I will ease the topmast halyard and down it will come. To raise it is just the reverse.

## IRON WORK

I now set to making the hardware. At my favorite scrap-steel yard, I had previously located some steel pipe with a 4 inch internal diameter. I got three feet of this for five bucks! With the help of a friend's chop saw, I cut a foot of this up to make the 2" top-mast band, and a 3" wide saddle. The two foot piece will be the stub-mast into which the Main Mast will step. It will also mount the sliding gooseneck. The 3" piece I reserved to use as a saddle or parrel for the course yard. With this saddle, which goes above the highest hoist of the gaff jaws, the entire course yard can be easily lowered to the deck in extreme weather. Toad also carries a square topsail above the course.

The mast band for the Mizzen Mast is made up from the a coupling for 2" galvanized rigid electrical conduit, and the tangs are made up from 5/16" plate, cut to the required shapes. The coupling is cut into two pieces and tabs welded to the sides in order to cramp the bands to the mast. These are not cramped very tightly, but instead are cramped

snugly and also rest on the bolster.

## COSTS

Another appealing aspect of this method of mast and spar construction is the low cost involved. The final cost for the 9' 6" Mizzen Mast (including the hounds band) was \$22.81. This was made up of the following:

9' of 1 1/4" Schedule 40 PVC Pipe @ .416 per foot . .	\$3.74
20 sq. ft. of Veneer @ .41 per sq. ft. . . . .	\$8.20
1/4 Gallon of Epoxy Glue at \$35.00 per Gallon . . . .	\$8.75
2" Rigid Electrical Pipe Coupling . . . . .	\$1.87
1 lb. 5/16" Steel Stock @ .25 per pound . . . . .	.25
<b>TOTAL COST . . . . .</b>	<b>\$22.81</b>

## PART 9

We will finally finish the hull planking after suffering through the frustrating delays of a long, cold and difficult winter. Coincident with finishing the planking we will also install the inter-skin ballast.

0 . . . . . 365

156 Hours to Date

## Time Log

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# "So-Du-It!"

By Jim Betts

If you can't afford an America's Cup or BOC racer - at about \$10 million but want to race on the "big track" (the oceans), you can do it in a 14-footer for peanuts. (Build it yourself for around \$4,000 or have a production version for about \$7,000.)

The new "So-Du-It! class (that's So for solo, Du for duo and It! added to turn a name into a slogan), offers competition, safety, comfort and economy. SDI! was designed by Ted Brewer and Jim Betts, who are co-authors of the book "Understanding Boat Design," and founders of the Yacht Design Institute.

The boat has a unique A-frame mast and a double (Ljungstrom) sail. The two sails lie together on the wind and wing-out downwind. There is no boom. SDI! features a safe, self-bailing cockpit with 20-inch coamings. The boat is self-righting because of its 350-pound keel and is self-rescuing due to built-in foam flotation.

The cabin has two berths, head, space for a small stove, and storage in both lockers and spaces under the berths. Additional storage space is in lockers in the cockpit.

Construction of the do-it-yourself version is cold-molded, with three layers of 1/8" veneer. Building is simplified by full-size patterns for the seven frame stations. A production version in fiberglass is also offered.

In the racing version, class rules specify that the cabin sides and deck be painted orange, as an added safety feature.

A forward hatch allows the roller furling headstay, and for anchoring. Class rules prohibit going on deck.

"SDI!" is just 14 feet LOA, with 6 foot beam, 3 foot draft and a displacement of 675 pounds. Sail area upwind (with the two sails lying together) is 120 square feet. This doubles to 240 square feet downwind.

For information, write: Jim Betts, "So-Du-It! Class, PO Box 1309, Point Pleasant Beach NJ 08742.

Sea Trials in Seattle on March 20.



The Three Wise Men: Ted Brewer, Jim Betts, and builder Nils Andersson. (L. to R.) We were on display at the Center for Wooden Boats, in Seattle for four days. Old ship in background makes nice "scale" for our 14 footer. Note that Brewer is smiling because she floated on her lines and performed well. My hair still standing on edge after a nice day of 30-knot winds. Builder still drilling holes. (We repositioned some of the cleats.) All in all, we found "SDI!" to do just what we thought. It's a fine mini-racer and a comfy, safe, affordable cruiser. A 6'-3" visitor sat up in comfort in the cabin.




Yes, by God, she is self-righting. Here, in about a 30-knot wind, we sheeted in and fell off and shifted our weight to see how far she'd go. You can see the entire keel. Released the sheet and she popped right up without a drop in the cockpit. The videotape of this is much more fun.



Nils and I flying the twins in 20 knots. We're clipping off 8 knots here, despite hull speed of only 5. Yes, she will get up and plane. The twins will do much better when we add poles P&S.

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## Unbuilding a Boat

By John Smith

My dad, like many other dreamers of limited means, built himself a boat. Since this was done before I came along, you'll find no references to the building of that boat in this article. That's okay, though, because there seems to be a limitless supply of articles concerning people building boats. One less from me shouldn't make much difference.

I do remember the "Electron". It was a 23' cruising sloop.

While it was not exactly a sports car among sailboats, it was quite spacious inside, it was seaworthy, and it gave me many fond memories of sailing on Raritan Bay and Long Island Sound. However, there seems to be an abundance of articles on cruising, so I'll not get into that either.

If every boat ever built was still with us, they probably wouldn't all fit. The sad fact of life is that all boats eventually meet their demise. Some sink. Some lie on the side of a river and rot to death. Some simply rot to death in obscure corners of old boat yards. A lucky few are grabbed by historians, restored, and may well live forever. The vast majority, however, have a finite life time.

This is the story of the rather unique demise of our beloved "Electron". It is the saga of "Unbuilding a Boat".

Although it wasn't nearly as fashionable then, my dad was unemployed. He was having no luck finding work. The family fell on the expected hard times. The "Electron" cost money to keep even when we weren't using her, because she was not a boat that one could bring home and keep in the back yard. That meant that wherever she was, she ran up a bill for just being there.

The immediate solution to this problem was to sell her, and my dad tried. Numerous advertisements were placed, and a number of calls received. Some even showed up. But nobody bought. I don't think anyone ever "designed" the "Electron". She was, as I've said, roomy, seaworthy, and a quite functional little sloop. As fond as we were of her, no one else seemed to want her. And she kept running up bills.

My parents then reached a painful decision. They refused to give the boat away. The thought of losing her to unpaid yard bills was even more distasteful. There was only one solution available; disassemble her.

Herein started our unusual family saga. While I went to high school every day, my parents went to the boat yard. Each evening they would come home with various parts of the "Electron" on the car's roof rack, and I would help them stack it all relatively neatly in our

back yard. We saved as many fastenings as we could. All the hardware was stored in the basement. The entire operation was done in as orderly a fashion as possible. We figured that if family finances improved, we would make rebuilding our boat as easy as possible. The spars came home in one piece. Even the lead from the keel was salvaged for future use.

We ended with surprisingly neat supplies of planking, plywood from bunks, various fittings, and what-not. Everything was marked and organized. It was kind of like having a kit boat sitting there, just waiting to be put together.

It would thrill me no end to write here that times got better, we put the "Electron" back together, and that my children are now enjoying the boat as I did when I was their age. If this were a movie script, that would most likely be the ending. However, we are dealing with real life. Finances and health soon made it apparent that the "Electron" was going to remain the various piles of lumber in our yard.

Another painful decision then faced the Smith family. Realizing that we'd never rebuild the boat, we decided to put its remains to the best use possible. We sold the lead and some of the hardware and fittings. The woods served a variety of purposes within the family. What used to be bunks are now basement shelves. Various other pieces were used to make work benches both in our basement and my grandpa's garage. Much of our beloved sailboat lives on in many useful forms.

Lumber past what we could put to useful purposes we cut up and used for firewood. While there was an admitted sadness to this, we all agree that these fires were quite special. While the warmth of the flames filled the room, warm memories of the "Electron" filled our hearts. We recalled the sea gull who landed on deck and stayed there for hours like he was our pet. We remembered...oh heck, this list could go on forever. Even running aground was a fond memory in front of the fire.

There is no more "Electron". There are no more fires. The memories live on. Even our painful, practical decisions were tempered by a bit of sentiment. We kept the bowsprit. It remains mounted over the fireplace where so much of our boat was burned. This bowsprit does nothing to warm the room, but it sure warms our hearts.

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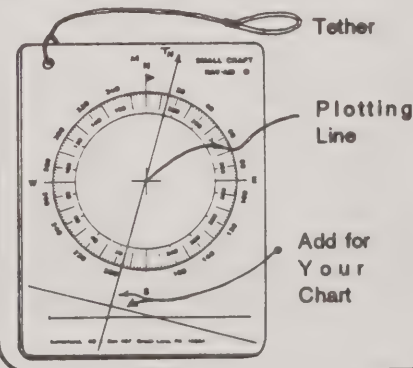
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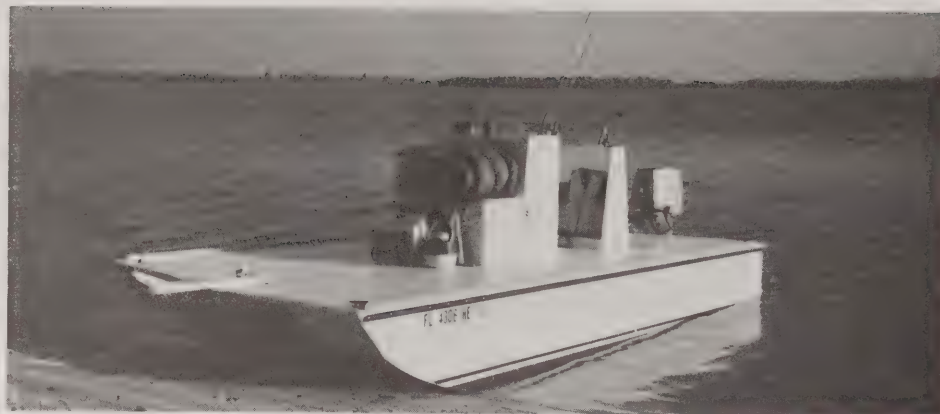
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## A YAWL, A CAT AND OTHER PROJECTS

I have recently finally launched and sold an Elver 20' yawl which the new owner is finishing out the details below and using her for camping on the Florida west coast. For myself over the winter I built a 16' Koeck Kat catamaran and we are fishing and diving from this boat all over. Other projects include building a 10' glass dinghy, a CLC Severn kayak and restoration of a 15' plywood runabout.

The Koek Kat is a tunnel hull which allows the outboard to run effectively in shallower water than if fitted to a vee-hull, and we can go into 12" shallows under power with her. The designer, John Koeck, had the amateur builder in mind when he designed the boat and claims about 150 hours with basic tools will do the job

for an amateur. The plans are \$75 from J.M. Koeck Designs, P.O. Box 6224, Terra Ceia Island, FL 34250.

I will be teaching the first ever wooden boat building class at the Crealde Shool of Art starting in late June and we hope interest will support more classes in summer and fall. I would like to offer weekend seminars for adults like those offered in New England.

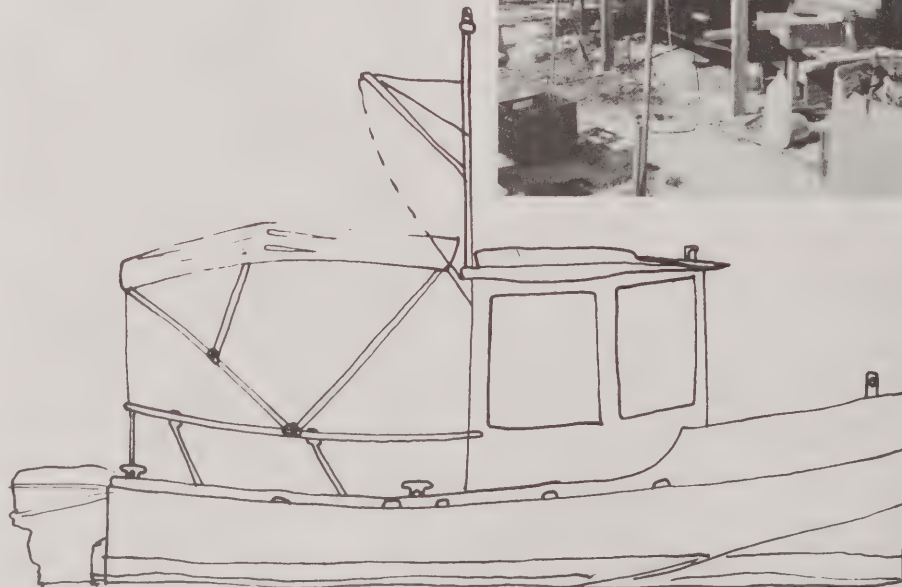
Finally, I am currently seeking owner/builders to co-op construction of their boats here at my shop. I have the space, tools and experience to produce just about any boat. My personal hope is to find someone interested in building Phil Bolger's AS-29.

CHARLES AKERS, Boatbuilder, 2816 Ahern Dr., Orlando, FL 32817.

## AT THE PAINTING STAGE

I am at the painting stage with my Bolger Micro Trawler after about 350 hours. I've modified the plans to suit our southern sub-tropical climate by including larger open windows and a larger rear deck instead of the enclosed rear cabin. Phil Bolger commented on my changes as "seeming very sensible." It's been a joy to build and I'm now close to launching.

Gary Zimmerman, Box 1844, Key West, FL 33041.





## BUILDING A "PLAID" KAYAK

"Hoot, mon," I thought you might be interested in the story of my "Plaid Kayak".

I began building kayaks in 1961, an enjoying them goes without saying, of course. I have built sizes from 10' to 18'6" and enjoyed building each one, but building seventeen kayaks in one summer by myself caused burnout and I laid off for four years while I became a screen printer. By the end of that period I found I wanted no more pressure and came running back to building kayaks and boats with NO PRESSURE!

This latest kayak is a Blandford PBK-20, a two-place 15' fabric covered craft rated for up to 600 pounds. It is, if I recall correctly, called a sea kayak.

The skin is a yard sale item! I found a complete bolt of a type of upholstery material for (get a grip now) fifty cents! It is PLAID! I kept saying, "Some day I'm gonna cover a kayak with that stuff." When my brother-in-law, "Ole Wild Eye Weaver", suddenly began building a Dave Hazen design strip canoe last fall I, not to be outdone, started the PLAID kayak.

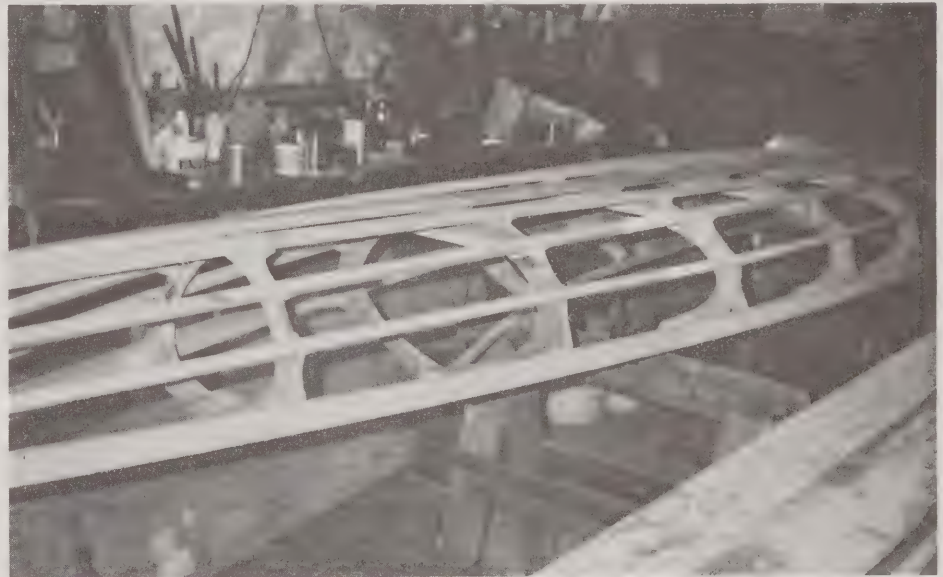
The finished weight is right at 48 pounds and the construction is as strong as a kayak can be built of wood and fabric. Sheer and keel are three 3/4"x3/4" full length strips of fir. With glued and stapled joints these are as strong as an aerobatic airplane. The fabric is doped, two layers on deck and three layers on the bottom, followed by three-four coats of polyurethane varnish. The dope came from a nearby airport and is the non-taughtening butyrate type. It says it's non taughtening but it still shrank the fabric. The skin on this kayak is TIGHT! It feels like naugahyde or such similar tough skin covers. But it is about ten pounds lighter than other cover materials recommended. Coamings are 1/4" marine grade ply. Frames are 1/2" marine grade ply, likewise the stems. Total hours I can guesstimate are around 38.

This kayak will be around long after I have gone to paddlers' paradise beyond that last takeout. In the meantime I'll answer inquiries but I won't be building kayaks on a regular basis any more. I'll be paddling some lake or river or maybe even the ocean on some quiet windless day. And maybe fishing.

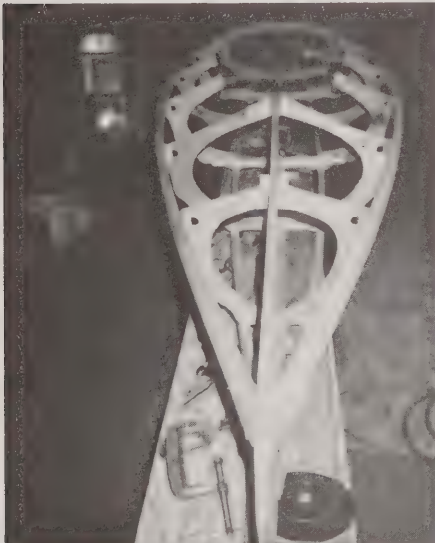
Rags Ragsdale, P.O. Box 153, Florence, OR 97439.



View from the stern, many stringers yet to go. 3/4"x1/2" sheer stringers make for great strength.



All stringers in place, weight at this point is 18 pounds.



Everything in place but the cockpit stringers, seen down the centerline. Holes in frames were for clamping purposes.



The bow in detail after covering.





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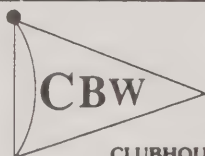
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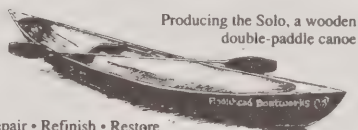
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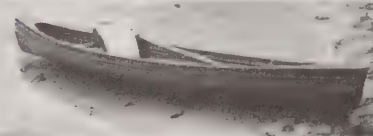
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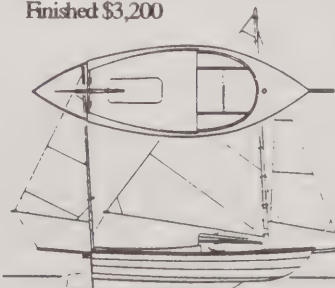
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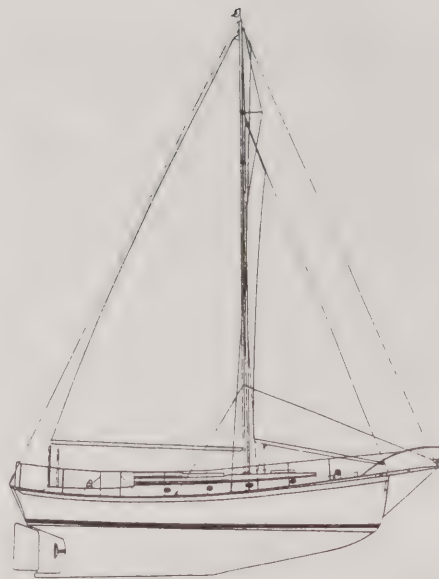


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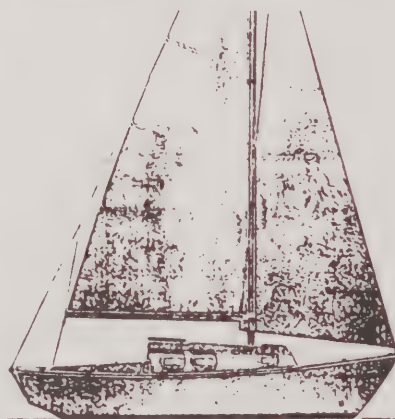
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20' "ELVER" DESIGN YAWL, strip plank cedar, spritsail rig, tanbark sails, roller furling jib, all Harken blocks. Recently refinished & in beautiful cond. Incl 6hp Seagull, E-Z Loader galv trlr, anchor, bulkhead compass, all lines, bumpers, etc. \$5,500.  
BILL HARMS, Mechanicsburg, PA, (717) 732-5567 aft 5 or lv message. (3)

TWO GRANTA SEA KAYAKS. 16.5' solo, gel coat damage on deck easily repaired. Otherwise new, w/rudder, spray cover. \$600 OBO. 17' double, lg open cockpit, launched once & nearly perfect, w/rudder. \$750 OBO.  
ERNST HEINCKE, Croton, NY, (914) 271-5387. (3)

16' GRUMMAN SPORT BOAT, \$500 or best offer. Sears Gamefisher 7.5hp, Merc 4hp w/tanks, \$300 ea. Homemade trlr free.  
DAVE, Lawrence, MA, (508) 687-1686 aft 5. (3)

23' MAST, hollow wood w/ standing rigging. Originally for Wood Pussy class catboat. \$40.  
G.H. ABBOT, Hanover, MA, (617) 878-8604. (3)

17' PYGMY SEA KAYAK, 40 lbs, exc cond. Blt & used 1 season, must sell. \$850 or BO.  
JOEL CLEMONS, Hanson, MA, (617) 293-9586. (3)

MAAS "AERO" SCULL, recent model, dak blue hull, white deck w/blue stripe, self bailer. Beautiful! \$1,900. Will deliver most of N.E.  
DAVID BINGER, W. Lebanon, NH, (603) 298-8266. (3)

17' SOVEREIGN 5.0 POCKET CRUISER, shoal draft, 7' beam, cockpit cushions, full flotation, teal storage covers, porta-potti, comfortable. On trlr.  
MARK SCHULTZ, Cherry Valley, NY, (607) 264-3194. (3)



16' PRINDLE CATAMARAN in gd shape, nds new trampoline & bottom mainsail panel. W/trlr, \$350 or offer.

RON WURST, Clarkston, MI, (313) 625-0848. (4)

APPLEDORE 19 high cap rec rowboat w/compl cat ketch sail rig & trlr. Exc winter boat or haul friends & camping gear. BO takes it.

GEORGE SMITH, Groton, CT, (203) 448-2534 (h), (203) 445-3481 (w). (4)

16' COM-PAC SLOOP, blt '77 by Hutchins. Shoal draft pocket cruiser in gd cond. Slps 2, 3 sails, M,J,D. 4hp Merc '86, galv trlr. Asking \$2,000 OBO.

BOB GROESCHNER, Norwalk, CT, (203) 847-8726, lv message. (4)

25.5' AMPHIBICON '58 classic wood/FG cruising sloop. Strip plank cedar w/mahogany cabin trunk & cockpit coaming. '89 Yamaha 9.9hp in well under lazarette. Cast iron keel w/FG CB, 30" draft. '89 Manchester M&J. Asking \$5,500.

JAMES HARMON, Cambridge, MA, (617) 868-2625. (4)

18' MARSHALL CAT, '77 w/'89 8hp Evinrude, porta potti, cockpit cushions, VHF, Edison steering, sink & stove, '83 long galv trlr. \$9,500.

RAYMOND PELOQUIN, Swansea, MA, (508) 674-0716. (4)

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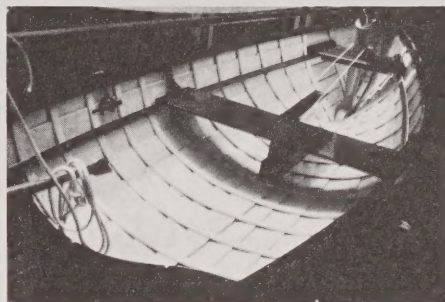
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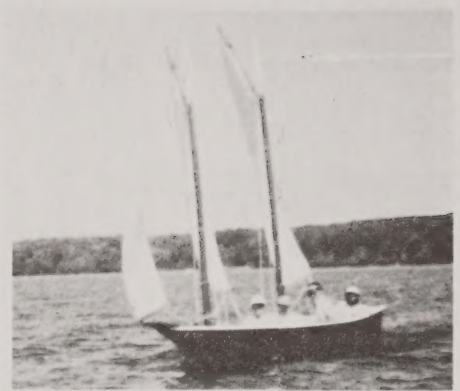
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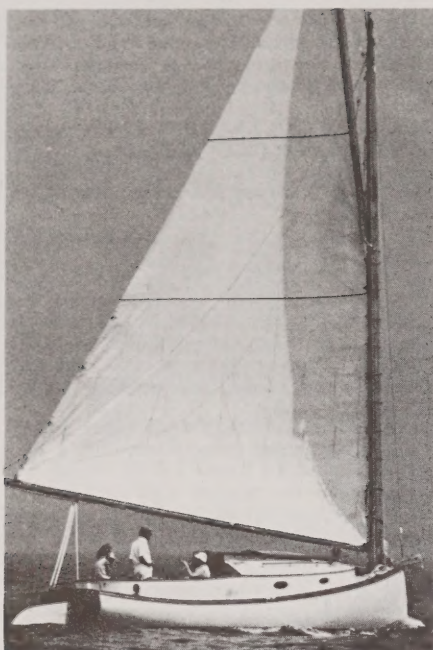
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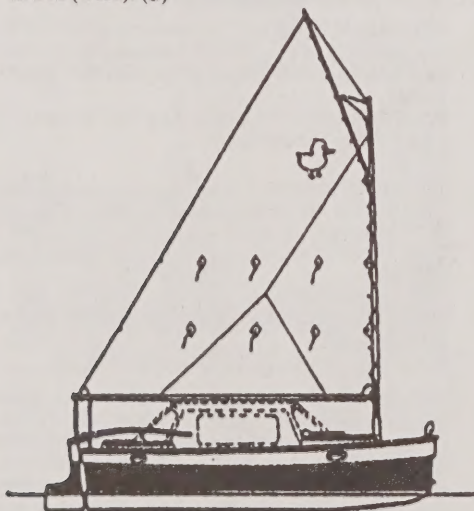
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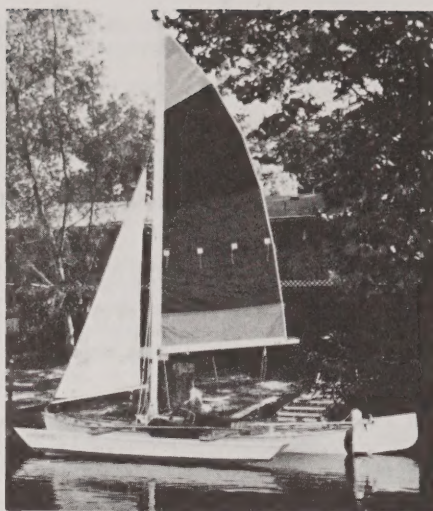




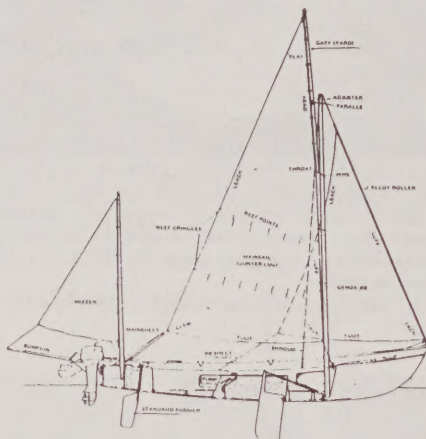
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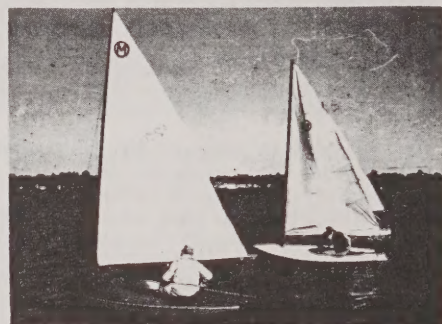
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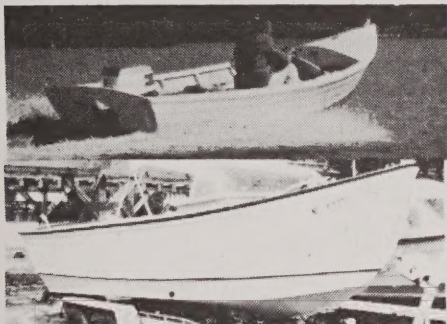
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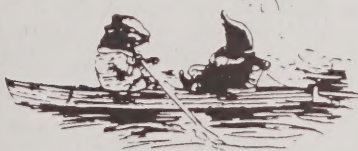
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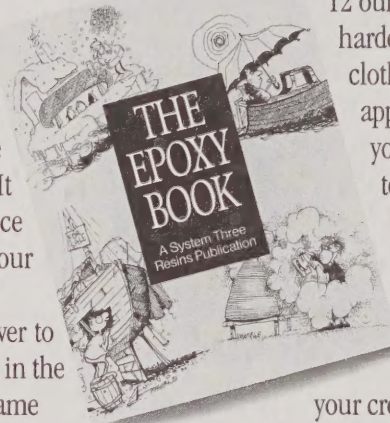
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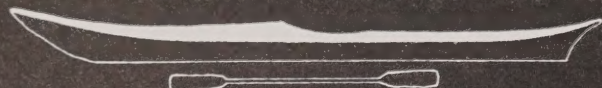




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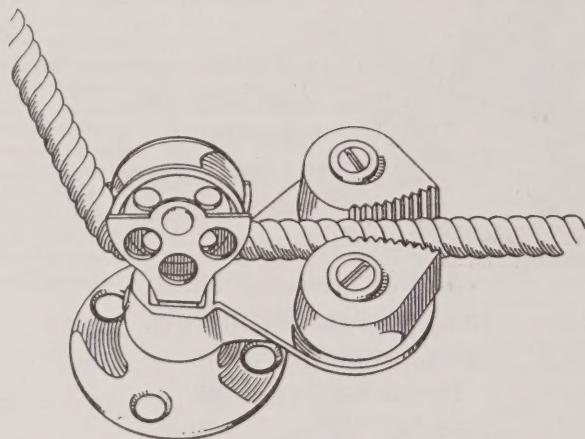
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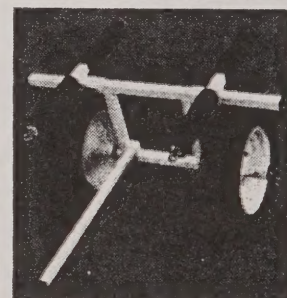
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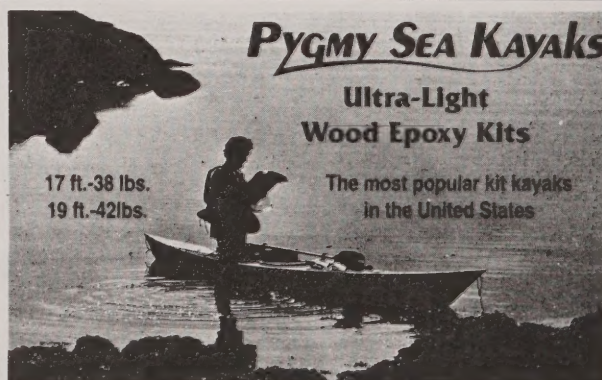
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